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THOMAS J. SHAHAN
Titular Bishop of Germanicopolis

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MORAL SERIES

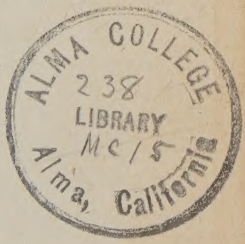
BY

RODERICK MacEACHEN

Priest of Columbus Diocese

Principles
Laws
Virtues
Sin

VOLUME I



PUBLISHED BY

CATHOLIC BOOK COMPANY

WHEELING, W. VA.

1916

20234

Nihil Obstat:

WILLIAM HALL,
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:

P. J. DONAHUE, D. D.,
Bishop of Wheeling.

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PREFACE

These five volumes form the Moral Series of the Catholic Library. In them is portrayed in all its simplicity and grandeur the moral teaching of the Catholic Church.

The Church is the great moral teacher of mankind. She was sent by Christ, her Divine Founder, to teach all nations and lead them to salvation. She is the custodian and interpreter of God's law and teaching. She is the city built upon a mountain.

The prophet foretold the moral power and splendor of the Church: "And many nations shall come in haste, and say: Come, let us go up the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."[1]

[1] Micheas iv, 2.

In the midst of men and nations the Church stands as the great beacon-light of morality. Diverse customs and ethical theories may arise amongst men, but the moral teachings of the Church remain unchanged. Her moral principles stand as firm as adamant; for they have been sealed with the stamp of divine authority.

When men depart from the moral standards taught by the Church, then human society is awry. Peace and social well-being give way to strife and turmoil.

Obedience and fidelity to the law of God alone can bring peace to men. "Peace to men of good will,"[2] the angel said. Peace to those who love and obey God's law.

The moral teachings of the Church propound and explain the law of God. In her moral teachings the Church offers true and safe guidance for all

[2] St. Luke ii, 14.

human actions. She sets forth clear and defined rules and principles for the moral life of man.

These little volumes portray the moral teachings of the Church in a clear and concise manner. Practically they cover the whole field of Moral Theology.

The Moral Series will be a great boon to our people. Here they will find an answer to the many great moral questions that have arisen, especially in our day. Here they will find expressed in positive terms the great moral truths and precepts that are taught by the Church.

It is with joy that I see these little volumes going forth to the English-speaking world. They will show to many who have not known thereof, the sublimity of Catholic morality. Many of our separated brethren will learn in them, for the first time, the power and security, the clarity and the beauty of Catholic Moral teachings.

May these little volumes lead many sincere souls to know and love God's holy law. May God grant grace and blessing to all who read these pages. May Mary Immaculate intercede for them.

Thomas J. Shahan
Titular Bishop of Germanicopolis.

Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, 1916.

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MORAL SERIES.

Vol. I.

CHAPTER I

Moral Teaching

MORAL teaching treats of man's actions. It lays down principles of human conduct. It directs our actions. It enables us to work out our last end and destiny. It sets forth the moral law.

The principles of moral teaching are drawn from divine Revelation and from reason. Mother Church guards this moral teaching. It is part of the divine Truth which Christ left to His Church.

Moral teaching is called moral Theology. It differs from dogmatic teaching. Dogmatic teaching refers to faith. Moral teaching refers to human con-

duct. It directs us how to serve God. It tells us how to live right with our fellowman.

Moral teaching pertains only to the free-will actions of man. It directs only those actions for which man is responsible. It regulates only those actions which come from man's free will.

The object of moral teaching is supernatural. It is our eternal destiny. Hence, this teaching is drawn in part from divine Revelation. It is the work of the Church alone to spread this teaching.

God raised man from his mere natural state. He gave him a supernatural destiny. Hence, He Himself gave man a law to guide his actions. He directs him in the way to attain his supernatural destiny.

All free-will, deliberate actions of man are moral actions. They may tend to man's last end. Then they

are good. Again, they may be opposed to man's last end. Then they are evil.

Moral teaching pertains to the Christian virtues. It marks out the way of a true Christian life. It gives the rules for the practice of righteousness. It enables us to do the will of God in all things. It guides us in the work of saving our souls.

The principles of morality are positive. They are certain. They are defined. For they come from God. There is no power on earth that can change these principles. There is no authority on earth that can dispense from them.

Authors follow different methods of setting forth the moral teaching of the Church. These methods are admitted by the Church. However, the Church guides every decision. She watches over every expression of moral teaching.

Some follow the *positive* method. They simply set down the moral

truths in order. They give them just as they are taken from divine Revelation. They aim merely to spread the knowledge of these truths.

Others follow the *scholastic* method of treating moral teaching. They, of course, set down the same moral truths. But they add explanations. They give illustrations. They apply the principles of philosophy to these truths. Thus they hope to make the moral truth clearer. Hence, the scholastic method affords a wider knowledge of moral teaching.

There is another method of treating moral teaching. It is the *casuistic* method. Those who follow this method explain the moral truths by examples. The authors who follow this method solely are called casuists. They make up cases. These fit the particular moral truths. Then these cases are solved. Thus moral truths are taught.

In our day these methods are formed

into one. Most authors today unite them. They lay down the revealed and natural truths. They explain these truths. At times they give examples. Again they add motives and reasons. Thus the method now followed is very practical.

CHAPTER II

Sources of Moral Teaching

GOD is the Author of the moral law. God has revealed the moral truth to us. Hence, it is from the Church that we must learn this truth. For the Church is the guardian of all divine Revelation.

Moral teaching embraces moral laws and moral truth. These are contained in nature and in divine Revelation. They are found in the Bible and Tradition. The Old Testament contains many moral truths and precepts. It also contains ceremonial and judicial precepts. These ceremonial and judicial precepts are no longer in force. They belonged to the Old Law.

The New Testament is the main source of moral teaching. It gives

moral truths. It gives moral precepts. It gives moral counsels. These were spoken by the lips of our Divine Saviour. It also portrays the true Christian life. It is that life modeled after the life of our Divine Saviour.

The Councils of the Church define moral teaching. They set down the rules and precepts that guide the lives of the faithful. These decisions are called doctrines of morals.

The decrees of the popes define questions of morals. Their letters and encyclicals teach the great moral truths.

The Sacred Congregations answer many moral questions. Difficulties are submitted to them. Responses are given. They decide many doubts concerning moral law and precept. They condemn false propositions.

Many popes have condemned long lists of false propositions. The great Syllabus of Pius IX condemned many moral errors. Pius X also gave forth

a great Syllabus. It also condemned many false ideas of morality. Syllabus here means a collection of condemned errors. Pius IX published his Syllabus in an encyclical A. D. 1864. Pius X gave forth his Syllabus in a decree A. D. 1907.

The works of the early Fathers are sources of moral teaching. They were great teachers in the early Church. Their teaching is of great authority.

The Theologians of the Church also expound moral truth. The works of great Theologians are important in the matter of moral teaching. The Church often refers to them. St. Thomas and St. Alphonsus Ligouri are two of our greatest moral Theologians.

Canon Law is also a guide in moral conduct. Canon Law comprises the laws laid down by the Church. These have authority from the Church. The Church has authority from God.

Hence, these laws help the faithful to work out their last end and destiny.

Next to Revelation, human reason is the great source of moral truth. Yet it must be reason enlightened by Faith. Reason comes from God. By Faith it is enabled to judge of the things that pertain to eternity. Hence, it can assist us in working out our supernatural destiny.

The Civil Law is a norm of morality. Civil Laws may bind in conscience. God gives authority to the civil power. Hence, to be just and upright we must obey the Civil Law.

The usages and practices of the Church are sources of moral truth. They express moral norms and precepts. They show forth the beauty of moral truth in the lives of the faithful.

Moral Philosophy deals with the moral principles that are drawn from reason. Yet it helps man to work out

his eternal destiny. It teaches him to live a righteous and upright life. It lays down the natural norms of morality.

God gave us a supernatural destiny. Yet He did not take away the natural norms of morality. He raised them to higher perfection. He added to them new force. He put about them His Own divine Truths and precepts. Thus the natural law is always in force. The norms of human reason are binding. They help to lead us to God.

CHAPTER III

Our Last End and Destiny

MAN is destined to partake of eternal life. He is destined to taste of divine love. He is destined to possess the Beatific Vision. He is destined to see God face to face. He is destined to be filled with knowledge and truth. He is destined to be united with his God and his Creator. He is destined to be like unto Him. This is his last end and destiny.

"Dearly beloved," says St. John, "we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like to him; because we shall see him as he is."[1] "For we know in part," adds St. Paul, "and

[1] 1 Epistle of St. John iii, 2.

we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. . . . We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known."[2]

In heaven we shall be glorified. We shall possess perfect happiness. Our destiny is supernatural. Our joy will be eternal.

In eternity we shall enjoy the good things of our heavenly Father's house. We are the adopted children of God. There we shall be children at home. We shall be united with our heavenly Father. We shall reign in glory with God. Our blessed Lord has promised us all this. "And I dispose to you as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom; that you may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom."[3]

[2] 1 Epistle to the Corinthians xiii, 9-12.
[3] St. Luke xxii, 29, 30.

"To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne: as I also have overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne."[4]

We are destined to give glory to God forever. This is the primary object of our being. We are also destined for eternal beatitude. This is the secondary object of our being.

God is the Highest Good. He is the Summum Bonum. There is inborn within us a desire to be united with God. We yearn for Him. Our hearts will never rest until they rest in Him.

God has revealed laws and precepts to guide our lives. He will not leave us in doubt. He teaches us the true way of life. He directs us to Himself and our eternal home. It is for this He has given His moral truth into the care of holy Church.

God has given us sanctifying grace. By sanctifying grace we are raised to a

[4] Apocalypse iii, 21.

higher order. We take on something of a supernatural nature. We are fitted for supernatural life.

God gives us actual graces. They enable us to perform supernatural acts. Supernatural acts are such as aid us to attain our supernatural end.

By supernatural graces, God enlightens our mind and strengthens our will. Thus we may both know and do good acts.

Then there are supernatural virtues. They are gifts which God bestows upon us. Or we acquire them by the aid of divine grace. They are habits of the soul. They are powers that are above our nature. Through them we love and serve God upon earth.

The Theological virtues enable us to perform supernatural actions. They help us to attain our supernatural destiny. The moral virtues are habits bestowed upon us by God or acquired

by His grace. They enable us to seek the means of salvation.

God endows us with many graces and blessings. These are poured into our soul at Baptism. Our sins are forgiven. Then God adorns our soul with heavenly gifts. These are called infused virtues.

There are other virtues which we must acquire. Infused virtues give us the power to do supernatural good. By these our actions become supernatural. Acquired virtues make it easy to do good. They are practical. They are skill in good works. They are like exercise in an athlete. The more we practice them the easier do good works become.

God has bestowed upon us the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost enlightens us. He inspires us to good. He urges us to the practice of piety. He moves us to lead holy

lives. He often leads souls to perfection.

The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost help us to practice the seven great virtues. They are called the sevenfold gift. They are foretold by the prophet. "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord."[5]

God has given us the seven Sacraments. These are the great channels of divine grace. The Sacraments mould our lives in virtue. They nourish us upon divine grace. They strengthen us for good. They prepare us for our eternal destiny.

God has wondrously provided for us. He has provided for our natural wants. This He has done in the material world

[5] Isaias xi, 2, 3.

around us. He has given remedies for our bodily ills. These are concealed in the plants and minerals of the earth. God has done this for our bodies.

But God has done more for our souls. He has given us a religion that abundantly supplies all the needs of our souls. Our religion satisfies every just desire of the heart. It furnishes the means of working out our destiny. It leads us to our eternal home.

CHAPTER IV

Human Responsibility

MAN is a rational being. He possesses intellect. He possesses free will. He knows the difference between good and evil. He can judge the nature of his actions. He can do things or not do them. He can choose things or not choose them. He can accept things or reject them.

Man performs moral actions. Such are all the deliberate actions that proceed from free will. These are rational actions. They are free-will actions.

Man performs other actions that do not depend upon free will. Of themselves these are not moral actions. Yet they belong to man proper. The actions of infants belong to this class. They are not moral actions. For infants

do not possess the use of reason. The actions of a drunken man may belong to this class. Such also are actions performed in sleep or in delirium. Such also may be considered many actions that are done on sudden impulse.

There are other actions common to men and brutes. Seeing, hearing, smelling, walking, are actions of this kind. Of themselves these are not moral actions. They become moral from the end or intention which man gives to them.

Some actions are completed in the will. They are called elicited actions. Such are acts of love, desire or hatred. These are wilful actions. Man is responsible for them.

Other actions come only indirectly from the will. The will, however, commands these actions. To think, to walk and to eat are such actions. These are free-will actions.

Actions may be internal or external. Yet an action may be both internal and external. Internal actions are completed in the faculties of the soul. Such is the act of thinking.

External actions are completed through the external organs of the body. Such is the action of walking. The act of vocal prayer is both internal and external.

Actions may be good, evil or indifferent. Good actions are those that agree with right reason. Evil actions are those that are opposed to right reason. Indifferent actions are those that of themselves have no relation to right reason. They are good if they are performed for a good purpose. They are evil if they are performed for a bad purpose.

Actions may be natural or supernatural. Natural actions are those that proceed from our mere natural faculties. Supernatural actions are

those that we perform by the aid of divine grace. When they are performed in and by the aid of grace, they are called supernaturally meritorious actions. For through them God deigns to grant us supernatural merit in heaven.

We must answer to God for all our free-will actions. Several conditions are necessary to make us responsible for our actions.

Our actions must be free. We must be at liberty to perform them or not perform them. We must be able to stop or continue them. Hence, they must be performed with a certain deliberation. We must at least advert to the fact that we are performing the action. Otherwise it could not be called a free-will action.

We must know what we are doing. If nothing hinders the mind, we are acting with full knowledge. Then our

action is a pure free-will action. We are fully responsible for it.

Our mind may be hindered. We may be distracted. We may be half-asleep. We may be greatly disturbed. In such cases we could not give full consent to the action. We do not perform it with full advertence. Hence, we are not fully responsible for it.

We can not will anything that is unknown to us. Hence, we must know beforehand the nature of our action. Otherwise, we are not responsible for its results.

Actions must be performed with the consent of the will. Otherwise, they are not free. Consent may be perfect or imperfect. The will may not fully embrace the action. The consent is then imperfect. Again, the person fully wills what he is doing. He does it. Then his consent is perfect.

A person may feel some repugnance for what he is doing. Yet he does it.

Here again he gives full consent. A person may be dragged to martyrdom. He may feel horror for death. Yet at the same time he can submit with full consent of the will. A person may feel repulsion for a sin. Yet he may consent to it.

Consent may be expressed or it may be tacit. "Silence gives consent," the axiom has it. This is, however, not always true. Silence signifies consent unless something in the circumstances makes it clearly otherwise. If a person is asked to accept a present, his silence would signify his consent to accept it. The opposite is different. A person may listen in silence to a request for a donation. Here his silence may signify a refusal.

A person may see another commit a crime. He remains silent. Yet he is bound by position and by duty to deter the person. By his silence he consents to the crime.

Consent may be positive or negative. A person wilfully misses Mass. His consent is positive. He may decide to go to a picnic on Sunday morning. He has a positive intention to attend the picnic. But he can not hear Mass if he goes to the picnic. Thus he has given negative consent to miss Mass. He is guilty of the sin in both cases.

An intention may be actual, virtual, habitual or interpretative. An actual intention is one that proceeds then and there directly from the will. It is performed by the actual command of the will.

The agent is reflexly conscious that he wills the act. An actual intention may be explicit or implicit. It is explicit when the will clearly sees what it intends. A person desires Baptism. This is an actual explicit intention. It is implicit when the person does not clearly understand what he desires. He may ask to be

made a Christian. He does not know what is necessary. Implicitly he desires Baptism.

A virtual intention is one that existed in the will at some time. It was never recalled. It is still there hidden in the will. It is sufficiently strong to cause the action. A person intends to give an alms. He takes a piece of money in his hand. Later he meets a beggar. He is then engrossed in a conversation. He is not reflexly conscious of his intention. Yet mechanically he gives the money. He is here acting on a virtual intention.

An interpretative intention is one that never existed in the mind. It is a supposed intention. It is an intention that the will would naturally have. For example, a dying person is unconscious. He has not expressed a desire for the last Sacraments. He has been faithful to his Christian duty. It is certain that he would wish to receive

the last Sacraments. This is implied in the real intentions that guided his life. His intention is interpretative.

A person may perform an action with several intentions. He may make a pilgrimage for the sake of piety. At the same time he may intend to visit his friends on the way.

A person is not responsible for an action which he does against his will. An action of this kind can only be the result of external force. A person may be dragged by force into lewd company. It is entirely against his will. He is not responsible.

Again, a person may at first be unwilling. He is persuaded to act. Left to himself he would rather not do it. Under the spell of the persuasion he does it. In this case he would be responsible.

A person may act wilfully. Yet he does not intend or foresee the result of his act. He may shoot at a bird and

kill his neighbor's sheep. Here he is not responsible for the result.

An action may be perfectly or imperfectly unwilling. The will may reject something languidly and carelessly. Such an action entails more or less responsibility. If the will rejects something entirely and with full consent, the action is perfectly unwilling. It is then temptation to sin. It must be resisted.

CHAPTER V

Cause and Effect

THE will sometimes desires the cause though it does not desire the effect. A person performs a certain action. He foresees the effect. But he does not intend to produce the effect. This is an effect which is voluntary in the cause. The person knows the effect will follow. He places the cause. Hence, he permits the effect to follow. In certain cases he is responsible for the effect. It is then imputed to him.

This principle holds only for evil effects. There is never a question of a good effect that we only indirectly willed. It matters not that our action caused it. We can not merit by an effect that we did not intend. To get

credit for good we must intend it and directly will it.

Every effect that we directly intended is, of course, imputed to us. An effect that we but indirectly intended is not always to be imputed to us. Yet evil may be imputed to us even when we did not directly intend it. For we are also guilty if we fail to avoid evil.

We are responsible only for effects in so far as we foresee them. For instance, a physician knows that he has not the proper knowledge for the practice of medicine. He does not foresee the exact results. Yet he knows, in a general way, that his patients will suffer from his ignorance. Hence, he is responsible to the extent of his fore-knowledge for the injuries caused.

We are not responsible for an effect which we did not foresee. A person takes a glass of wine. He becomes intoxicated. He had no idea that one

glass of wine would affect his reason. He blasphemes. He engages in a drunken fight. These sins can scarcely be imputed to him. He did not foresee that he would commit them.

Sometimes a good act produces an evil effect. It is supposed that the evil effect can be foreseen. It is not allowed to place even a good cause if none other than an evil effect is to follow. But there may also follow a proportional good effect. Then we may merely permit the bad effect.

A person may take medicine that will at the same time save him from typhoid and prevent his attending Mass on Sunday. He is justified in so doing. He does not intend the bad effect.

A person may perform an action from which he knows evil will follow. He may also omit an action and thus cause evil. In both cases he is guilty

as soon as he wills the action. The guilt does not depend on the actual realization of the effect.

It is never allowed to do moral evil that good may follow. Or, as the axiom has it: "The end does not justify the means."

It would not be allowed to murder one innocent victim to save a thousand lives. It would not be allowed to sacrifice to idols once to save a nation to the Faith. It would not be allowed to murder one helpless infant to save the lives of all the mothers in the land.

This principle has often been tested in the Church. History records several striking examples. The Pope refused to grant to King Henry VIII a divorce from his lawful wife. To grant this divorce might have saved the English nation to the Faith. But it was refused.

The early martyrs might have saved

their lives. They needed only to have feigned homage to the pagan gods. They needed only say: "I renounce Christianity." But they would not. They were true to their Faith. It would have been wrong to do so. They would not perform evil even to save their lives.

The aged Eleazar was urged to break a slight precept of the Lord. He was promised mercy and life. But he gladly underwent death rather than do evil.

This principle is often put to the test in modern life. Young men are asked to join forbidden societies. They are promised preferment. They are promised high positions. But, thank God, our men are brave and true.

Sometimes almost the heroism of the martyrs is necessary. A young wife and mother is in imminent danger of death. The loving husband is torn with grief. An unlawful surgical op-

eration is suggested. But the heroic man and woman will not hear of it. They are true. The devoted husband kneels in his agony beside his loved one. And God blesses their noble sacrifice.

CHAPTER VI

Ignorance

IGNORANCE is a lack of knowledge. It is a state of the mind. Ignorance sometimes excuses a person from guilt.

We may be ignorant of the law. Or we may be ignorant of the fact. Take an example. A person fails to fast on the vigil of Pentecost. He does not know that he is bound to fast on this day. Hence, he is ignorant of the law.

Again, a person reads a forbidden book. He knows that certain books are forbidden. But he does not know that this particular book is forbidden. He is ignorant of the fact.

Ignorance may be vincible or invincible. A person is ignorant of his duty. He realizes that he lacks knowledge. He tries to learn. But he has

no means of learning his duty. Again, he may not be aware of his ignorance. He may be weak minded. He may be deceived by others in whom he trusts. He may be surrounded by ignorant people. He may be blinded by prejudice. Such ignorance is invincible. Its evil results are generally not imputable.

A person may be ignorant of things which he should know. He may have the opportunity to learn. He may be able to dispel his ignorance. But he does not. This is vincible ignorance. Its evil results are imputable.

Many people oppose the Catholic Church. From childhood they have heard calumnies against the Church. They have lived in a biased community. They have never had an opportunity to learn the truth about the Church. Their spiritual advisers are constantly teaching them to hate the Church. Their ignorance of the Church is

certainly invincible. They are rather to be pitied than to be blamed for the injustice they cause to the Church.

Others may be in a different position. They may have had opportunities to learn the truth about the Church. They may have refused to read books that were offered them. They may have had serious doubts about the false stories that were told them. They do not make any effort to dispel their ignorance. Thus their ignorance is both gross and vincible.

Others, again, may even wish to be ignorant about certain things. They may wish to oppose the Church. They may earn their living by opposing the Church. It may pay them to be ignorant of truth. Such ignorance is the worst form of ignorance. It is the product of insincerity. It is affected ignorance.

A person who does not know the things that he is bound by duty to

know is laboring under habitual ignorance. A Catholic may be ignorant of his Christian duty. He may have neglected to study his Catechism. He sins by not trying to learn his duty.

A doctor, a judge or a lawyer may be ignorant of the things that pertain to his calling. He is bound to take every opportunity of learning these things. Otherwise he sins by the injuries caused others through his ignorance.

Forgetfulness may be equivalent to invincible ignorance. A person forgets that it is Friday. He eats meat. He did not intend to break the precept of abstinence. For the moment, he did not know that it was a day of abstinence. Here he does not commit a sin.

CHAPTER VII

The Appetites

THERE are many appetites within us. There is a rational appetite. This is reason seeking the truth. But there are lower appetites. They are called sense appetites. They seek to give pleasure to the senses.

There must be a proper order in our lives. The lower appetites must be subjected to reason. Then reason must be guided by Faith. Thus by Faith reason is subjected to God.

There is a conflict between our higher and our lower desires. There is within our nature a yearning which is called concupiscence. This is a sort of sensual hunger. It impels us to gratify our senses. It is a bodily emotion that works upon the will. It

is a craving for unlawful pleasure. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit."[1]

"But I see another law in my members," says St. Paul, "fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members."[2] "For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do."[3]

Concupiscence struggles against reason. It will have pleasure at any cost. It suggests sensual pleasures to the will. It tries to bring the will to consent to these pleasures.

Concupiscence is not a sin. It is the result of original sin. Baptism wipes out original sin. But it does not take away concupiscence. Before the Fall, our first parents were free from concupiscence. The Blessed Virgin Mary was always free from concupiscence.

[1] Epistle to the Galatians v, 17.
[2] Epistle to the Romans vii, 23.
[3] Epistle to the Romans vii, 19.

Concupiscence is one of the passions. Eleven passions are enumerated. They are: love, concupiscence, joy, hatred, horror, sadness. These form the concupiscible appetite. The others are: hope, courage, despair, fear and anger. These form the irascible appetite.

Concupiscence has a direct bearing upon human actions. It is here considered as a craving of the lower appetites. At times it lessens the guilt of sinful actions. This craving of passion may arise without the consent of the will. In this case, it tends to lessen the guilt of sinful actions. It hinders the working of reason. It inclines the will to the evil.

Again, the craving of passion may follow the consent of the will. Then it does not lessen the guilt of the sinful action. The will has already acted.

Concupsicence is commonly styled temptations to sins of the flesh. They are evil sensual emotions. They may

arise contrary to the desires of the will.

God always gives to those who struggle manfully grace to overcome the cravings of the sensual appetites. He gives grace to overcome all temptations. God permits these assaults of the flesh. He wants us to win victory over temptation.

CHAPTER VIII

Fear, Violence, Habit

WE are responsible for our free actions only. Fear may, at times, hinder our freedom of action. It often works upon the will. It moves us to do things that we otherwise would not have done.

We may act because of fear. We may also act with fear. A man leaps from a burning building. He fears that he will be burned alive. He dashes to death. He has not committed the sin of suicide. He acted without deliberation. His will was overcome by fear.

A soldier may perform heroic deeds whilst he trembles with fear. A martyr may feel fear whilst he courageously walks to death. This is to act with

fear. This fear is a natural sentiment. It does not take away merit from actions. Nor does it hinder the freedom of the will.

Fear may be grave or slight. Grave danger causes grave fear. The danger of death, mutilation, disgrace and great loss of possessions might well cause great fear. But to be grave, these dangers must actually threaten the person. Nor are they grave unless escape from them is very difficult.

Slight fear arises from slight dangers. However, a slight danger may cause grave fear in certain persons. This is especially true of children and nervous persons.

Fear may be so grave as to disturb the use of reason. Then it takes away free will. Yet rarely does fear so affect the mind. Ordinarily, it permits some deliberation to the mind. Hence, a person who acts from fear does not

always lose complete control of his will. Yet his will may be influenced.

Fear does not often take away all the guilt of evil actions. It may indeed lessen this guilt. It also lessens the merit of good actions. Fear may influence a person either to good or evil. He may steal because he has been threatened with injury if he refuses. He may go to Church to avoid punishment.

In neither case is his action involuntary. He may act with reluctance. Yet his action is free.

We may be driven by force or violence to perform certain actions. Yet the human will can not be forced to act. The will is essentially free.

Violence may be absolute or relative. A person may be compelled by force to miss Mass on Sunday. If he is locked in prison, bound by chains, or held by physical force, the violence is absolute. But he refuses to consent.

He does not miss Mass by a free act of his will. He is not responsible for the action.

Violence is relative when it can be repelled. But the person suffers it. He is not entirely unwilling to perform the action. Such violence may lessen his guilt. But it does not take away the guilt of sinful actions.

Violence takes away guilt only when the will resists to the end. A person is dragged to sin. He resists with all his power. Yet he may even then become a victim to the allurement of the sin. He may consent to the sin to which he has been dragged. He is then guilty of whatever sinfulness he has freely admitted to his mind.

Habit sometimes lessens the freedom of actions. Habits may be voluntary or involuntary. Habits are formed by the repetition of actions. A person realizes that he is contracting a habit. He does not try to overcome it. The

habit is then voluntary. Again, he may not realize that he is forming a habit. After he contracts the habit, he tries to overcome it. Then it is an involuntary habit.

Neglect to overcome a sinful habit may be grave or slight. It may constitute either a mortal or a venial sin. If he neglects to overcome a habit of committing mortal sins, ordinarily it is mortal. If he neglects to overcome a habit of committing venial sins, ordinarily it is venial.

A person has the sinful habit of cursing and swearing. He deplores the sinful habit. He tries to overcome it. Inadvertently he curses or swears. This is not a sin. But perhaps he does not try to overcome the habit. Then he commits a sin every time he curses or swears.

The Christian rule is to guard against habits before they are formed. Life is made up of habits. It is a

blessed thing indeed when all our habits are good. Habit makes action easy. Virtuous habits then make the practice of virtue easy. The habit of prayer makes prayer easy. The habit of charity makes it easy for us to love God and our fellowman.

CHAPTER IX

Morality

THERE is a norm of human actions. Our free actions are called imputable actions. The relation that exists between imputable actions and the moral norm is called morality.

If the action is in keeping with the moral norm or rule, it is good. If it is opposed to this rule, it is an evil action. Hence, moral actions are either good or evil.

An action is morally good if it helps us toward our last end. It is morally evil if it hinders us from working toward our last end. By our rational nature we tend toward our last end. Hence, rational nature is the proximate norm of morality. Actions that are in keeping with our rational nature are

good. Those that are opposed to rational nature are evil.

Reason is a part of our nature. Every being must have the proximate norm of its own actions in its own nature. Our actions must agree with the requirements of rational nature.

As rational creatures we are held by a threefold bond. We have a bond with God. We have a bond with creatures and with the material world around us. We have a bond with ourselves. It is through the use of right reason that we respect this threefold bond. This bond imposes duties upon us.

The ultimate norm of moral actions is our last end. God is the basis of all morality. God is our last end. Moral actions are the means by which we reach our last end.

God is the Highest Good. He is the Summum Bonum. For Him we are created. Our destiny is to be united

with Him. Hence, our actions to be good must agree with the will of God.

To be good, an action must agree with every principle of morality. To be evil, an action need only be opposed to one moral principle.

The object, the end and the circumstances determine the nature of specific actions. The object is the thing the will intends to accomplish by the act.

The end is the motive from which we act. A good action may become evil because of a bad motive. Yet a bad action can not become good because of a good motive. A person might steal so that he could give to the poor. His motive is good. But his action is sinful.

Circumstances change the character of actions. Seven circumstances are given. They are: Who, What, Where, What means, Why, How and When.

There is always question of who does

a thing. A son or a brother may take liberties that would be wrong in another. A lay person may do things that a cleric may not do.

It makes a difference what is done. It is a graver sin to steal a large sum than to steal a penny. It is a graver sin to injure a man seriously than to injure him slightly.

It makes a difference where a thing is done. It is simple theft to steal from a house. It is a sacrilegious theft to steal from a Church. Here there is a sin of theft and a sin of sacrilege.

The means are important also. A thief may send a child into a house to take money. This would add to his guilt of theft. He would commit both the sin of theft and the sin of scandal.

There is always the question of why a thing was done. It touches upon the motive of actions. A person destroys a machine so that another will

be blamed. This circumstance adds guilt to his sin.

There is question also of how a thing is done. Even murder may be more sinful when cruelty is added.

It often makes a difference when a thing is done. Certain things are permitted on week days that are not permitted on Sundays.

Circumstances can never make evil actions good. Yet circumstances may lessen or increase the guilt of sinful actions.

Again, circumstances change the nature of actions. Circumstances may change a venial sin into a mortal sin. They may change a mortal sin into a sacrilege. Thus it is well to be circumspect in all our actions.

CHAPTER X

The Morality of Actions

EVERY action that is free and intentional is a moral action. There are indeed actions that are indifferent. They are neither good nor evil in themselves. To walk is an indifferent action. Yet a good motive may make it good. To walk to Church is a good action. To walk for bodily exercise is a good action.

An evil motive may make an indifferent action bad. To walk to a sinful place is an evil action.

Actions may be either morally or physically good. Yet in both cases these actions must conform with rational nature. Morally good actions are those that lead to our last end.

Physically good actions are those

that lead to bodily welfare. We are bound to be reasonable with our bodies. We must take care of our life and health.

It is allowed to enjoy lawful pleasure and amusement. We may play, talk, sing, eat. We may amuse ourselves. Yet we must always keep within the proper bounds of reason.

God does not forbid rational pleasures. We possess a spiritual nature.

But we also possess an animal nature. We are permitted to provide for our animal nature. Yet in this we must always be guided by right reason. Then right reason is guided by the positive law of God.

Our Divine Lord indeed says: "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment."[1] Here is meant idle gossip.

Pleasure is sinful when it excludes our last end. It is then not in con-

[1] St. Matthew xii, 36.

formity with our rational nature. Pleasure should never interfere with our duty to God, to our fellowman, nor to ourselves.

All our free actions come from our will. Every action is first formed in the will. It is then called an internal action. When it has been executed by some faculty under command of the will, it is called an external action.

The internal action is commonly called the intention. But it is more. It is the decision and the command of the will to act. The internal action decides the guilt or merit of an action.

Of itself, the external action does not add any guilt or merit to an action. But the external action may add guilt by occasioning other internal actions. A man commits murder. The internal act contains the whole guilt of murder. But the external act may involve the sins of injustice and uncharity.

Actions by which we attain our supernatural end are called supernatural actions. By the aid of divine grace they have merit in heaven. Supernatural actions must always have certain qualities. They must be morally good. They must proceed from faculties that have been elevated by actual grace. Man of himself can not perform supernatural actions. This he can do only by God's grace.

A particular action may be either natural or supernatural. For example: A man pities a beggar. He gives him an alms from a mere natural motive. His action is natural. Again, he gives an alms to a beggar. He looks upon the beggar as his brother who has been redeemed by Christ. He knows Christ commanded him to love his neighbor as himself. Here his action is supernatural. It proceeds from faith in Christ.

Every morally good action that

proceeds from a supernatural principle is supernatural. By a supernatural intention we can make ordinary actions supernatural. Thus we should do our ordinary work for the honor and glory of God.

Faith adds merit to our actions. Yet it is divine grace that makes us capable of performing supernatural actions. It is thus we can gain eternal life.

God destined us for supernatural life. He imposed upon us the duty of striving for this supernatural life. Hence, He gave us grace to perform actions that have merit in eternity.

Merit, properly so-called, demands special conditions. To gain supernatural merit we must be in the state of grace. Hence, without sanctifying grace our supernatural actions do not possess true and perfect merit.

Sanctifying grace gives value to our actions. It makes them worthy of

the reward. For Christ said: "Abide in me; and I in you. As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me."[2]

God has promised to reward our good works. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation," says St. James, "for, when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love him."[3] The Apostle says: "That you become not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience shall inherit the promises."[4]

God made us a promise. We must work in His vineyard. He promises to reward our labors. It is thus we can claim the reward of our good works. If we die in His grace we merit eternal life.

[2] St. John xv, 4.
[3] Epistle of St. James i, 12.
[4] Epistle to the Hebrews vi, 12.

Our good works must be actuated by charity. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."[5]

By these words the Apostle refers to the charity that comes with sanctifying grace. Charity is love. Those who possess sanctifying grace are dear to God. They love God. They love their fellowmen. Charity dwells in their hearts. They do good by God's grace. Thus their good deeds have merit in eternity.

[5] 1 Epistle to the Corinthians xiii, 1-3.

CHAPTER XI

Conscience

CONSCIENCE is the personal internal guide of human actions. It is ruled by reason. It is an act of the intellect by which we judge our actions. It passes upon actions about to be performed. It decides whether they are good or evil.

Conscience proper passes upon particular actions. We possess another power that passes upon moral principles. This is a kind of fundamental knowledge. Through it we know the universal principles of morality. This power is an inborn habit. It is the basis of conscience proper. It is called synderesis.

St. Thomas describes this power: "It behooves human nature, so far

as it touches upon angelic nature, to have a knowledge of truth, without investigation, both in speculative and practical things. And indeed this knowledge must be the principle of all subsequent knowledge whether speculative or practical. Principles must be fixed and certain. Hence, this knowledge is inseated in man's nature. For since he recognizes it as the seed of all subsequent knowledge . . . this knowledge must be habitual, so that he may readily use it whenever it is necessary. But there is in the human soul a certain natural habit, by which it knows the speculative principles of the sciences. We call this habit the intellect of principles. Hence, there is in the soul a certain natural habit which bears upon the first principles of actions. These are the general principles of the natural law. This habit then pertains to synderesis."[1]

[1] De Veritate q. 16, a, 1.

Thus by our own reason we know the general principles of morality. We know that we must do good and avoid evil. We know that we should keep our promises. We know the principles of the natural law. From this knowledge we can deduce certain moral truths.

Conscience is properly called an act of the intellect. It is a judgment. It is not a power or faculty. Nor is it, properly speaking, a habit. It is an act.

Conscience has several functions. "Conscience is said to *testify*, *to bind*, *to prompt*, and even *to accuse*, *to cause remorse* and *to reprove*. . . . It is clear that these follow the actual application of knowledge to the things that we do. Hence, conscience is properly called an act."[2]

Conscience dictates to us what is right or wrong. It acts like a precept

[2] St. Thomas I, q. 79, a. 8.

or a counsel. Conscience can not force us to act. We can follow conscience, or we can act contrary to conscience.

Conscience is a sure rule for our moral actions. When we follow conscience our actions are good. When we act against conscience our actions are evil. Conscience comes from God. He put it into our very nature. That is, He put there the principles from which it is derived. He gave us reason to guide us. He enlightened our reason by Faith. So that conscience is an internal light. It is an inner voice to which we must always hearken.

The authority of conscience is supreme. There is no power on earth that may ask us to act against the dictates of conscience.

Conscience may be certain or doubtful. We are always bound to follow conscience when it is certain. Sometimes doubts arise as to whether we

should do a certain thing. This constitutes a doubtful conscience. We may doubt whether or not an act is sinful. In this case it is a sin to perform the act. For we are willing to act not knowing whether or not our action would be sinful. Hence, we are willing to commit sin.

Conscience may be true or false. We are always bound to try to have a true conscience and to follow it. A true conscience dictates things in their proper light. It passes upon moral actions with knowledge and truth.

A false conscience is one that is in error. It dictates error and not truth. A false conscience may be lax or scrupulous. A lax conscience makes light of sin. It is concerned only with grave sin. It neglects other sins. It tends to deny or belittle the guilt of sin. It makes grave sins appear slight.

A lax conscience is sometimes called a seared conscience. It is hardened by

the habit of sinning. It is not disturbed even with grave sins. St. Paul says: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy, and having their conscience seared."[3]

An erroneous conscience may also be pharisaical. It minimizes serious offences and magnifies slight offences. It is the spirit of the Pharisees: "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel."[4]

"Conscience should be neither too liberal nor too strict," says St. Bonaventure, "for a too liberal conscience begets presumption. It makes evil appear good. A too strict conscience begets despair. It makes good appear evil."[5]

[3] I Epistle to Timothy iv, 2.
[4] St. Matthew xxiii, 24.
[5] De Theol. Verit., Lib. 2, c. 52.

CHAPTER XII

False Conscience

A FALSE conscience may be vincible or invincible. We may be able to put away the error. Then we are not allowed to follow our conscience. It is in error that is vincible.

Again, we may not know that our conscience is false. We may think that we have overcome our ignorance. We are then bound to follow the dictates of our conscience. It may indeed be wrong. Yet we do not know this. We have no suspicion that we are in error. Hence, we must follow our conscience. It would be a sin to act against it.

A false conscience is generally the result of ignorance and neglect. Many fail to study the teachings of Faith.

They try to judge questions of religion for themselves. They acquire a false conscience. They are guilty of the cause. For their false conscience is the cause of many sins.

It is difficult to remain long in the false light of a false conscience. There are many means of studying the truths of religion. A false conscience begets doubts.

Reasonable doubts should always be heeded. Our conscience may be at peace. We may be in good faith. Yet we must be certain. We must be sincere.

A person may think he is performing a good action. He is in good faith. He has willed only good. Through no fault of his own he has erred. Unknowingly he has done evil. Here he is not guilty of sin.

Again, a person may consider a certain action sinful. He may consider it a mortal sin. Then he delib-

erately performs the action. In reality the action is not evil. Yet he has willed evil. He has deliberately consented to a mortal sin. Thus he sins.

Sometimes conscience is perplexed. Two courses are open to a person. He does not know which to choose.

An example may explain. It is Sunday. A person feels that he is bound by charity to stay with a sick person. He also knows that he is bound to hear Mass. He thinks he will sin in either case. If he stays, he will sin against the precept to hear Mass. If he goes, he will sin against charity. In this case he may do whichever he pleases. He may go or stay. Conscience tells him that both actions are good.

His notion is false. He could not be bound to commit a sin. It could never be a sin to obey a precept. It could never be a sin to follow the dictates of

right conscience. In fact, he should stay with the sick person.

Conscience does not command of itself. It is like a messenger of God. It is like a crier who announces a proclamation of a ruler. Hence it is that conscience can bind us. It has power from above us.

Conscience may be false. It may be in error. Yet we are in good faith. We are sincere. We do not suspect our error. Then, as always, we are bound to follow our conscience. We think our conscience is right. Then we must think that to act against it is wrong. Hence, we must follow its dictates.

CHAPTER XIII

A Scrupulous Conscience

SCRUPLES are an overdrawn fear of sin. A scrupulous person is filled with anxiety. He is always afraid he is sinning. If he commits a slight fault, he is convinced that it is a mortal sin. Many perplexing doubts harass his mind.

Scrupulosity is a trying affliction. It often causes great suffering of mind.

The first duty of a scrupulous person is to realize that he is scrupulous. He must know that he is not normal. He must realize that others are not fretting their lives away. Yet they too desire to serve God. Others are not afraid to go to Holy Communion. Others are not seeking the confessional several times a week. Others do not spend an hour in the confessional.

The scrupulous person can readily see that he is acting strangely. He can readily see what would be the result if all acted as he acts. Religion would be almost impossible. Priests would be driven to the hills. They would be followed by a mob. These would be clamoring for confession and asking questions.

Once a person realizes that he is scrupulous, he has already won half the victory. His next duty is to bind himself to obedience. He knows that his conscience is torn with anxiety and doubt. He thinks that every thought that passes through his mind is a sin.

He must put himself in the hands of his confessor. He must obey him absolutely. He must do whatever his confessor tells him. He must be humble.

Often the scrupulous entangle themselves in the multitude of their difficulties. They try to solve all their

own doubts. The more questions they ask the more they become perplexed.

Their only hope is humble, absolute obedience. The priest understands the state of their mind. He tells them what to do. Just as soon as they bring themselves to follow his commands without hesitation, they are saved. It is then only a question of time. Their scruples will be cured.

A scrupulous person is like a child lost in the woods. He is running about in distress and exhaustion. But he is traveling in circles. He never finds his way out.

But there is an official guide standing by. He knows every pathway. He is always ready to lead him out of the entanglement. This is the priest. He will be his guide. It is only and absolutely necessary to trust to him.

CHAPTER XIV

Law

LAWS are the external norms of human actions. Law is a rational ordinance given out by proper authority for the common good.

Law carries with it the idea of authority and obligation. It is an ordinance of a superior. It binds those who are subject to the lawgiver.

Law must be reasonable. It is indeed an expressed wish of the lawgiver. It is called the lawgiver's will. Yet it is intended for the common good.

Law is intended for the good of the whole community as such. It is given for the benefit of society. It benefits the individual indirectly.

He who makes a law must have jurisdiction. He must have power over

the community for which he makes the law.

Laws must be promulgated. They must be made known. They do not bind until they have been given out.

There can be no law without a law-giver. Rational creatures are governed by moral laws. By obedience to them, they work out their last end. The material world is governed by material and necessary laws. These laws also come from God.

Moral laws are rules that govern human actions. Laws are divine or they are human. They are divine when they are given directly by God. They are human when they come from a human legislator.

Divine law is either natural or positive. The natural law is implanted in man by God. It is made known by the light of reason. The positive law of God is made known by Revelation. God uses many means

to make His positive law known to us.

The positive law of God is divided into the Mosaic Law and the Evangelical Law. God gave His positive law to the Israelites through Moses. Then He made it known to the whole human race through Christ and the Church.

Human law is divided into ecclesiastical and civil law. Ecclesiastical law is promulgated by the Church. Civil law is promulgated by secular power.

The Church indeed makes human laws. Yet she is the custodian of the positive law of God. In the present dispensation, the Church alone is the judge of God's positive law.

The natural law of God is made known to us by the light of reason. Even the pagans are guided by the natural law. "For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature

those things that are of the law: these having not the law are a law to themselves; who shew the work of the law written in their hearts."[1]

The natural law is written in man's heart. It tells us that there is a difference between good and evil. It tells us that there is a God.

The natural law reveals certain general principles. From these man can form particular precepts. He knows that he should worship God. He knows that he should show some kind of justice to his fellowman. He knows that he should not kill. He knows something about the unity of matrimony.

No one can be utterly ignorant of the natural law. Even the uncivilized tribes know something of the natural law.

The natural law is unchangeable. Properly speaking, it can neither be

[1] Epistle to the Romans ii, 14, 15.

changed by God nor man. Its truths are essentially true. There can be no dispensation from the natural law. The Church interprets the natural law.

Man has a supernatural destiny. Hence, he must have a positive divine law. God must direct him to his supernatural destiny. This neither the natural law nor the human law could well do.

Man has been in diverse conditions at diverse times. For each period God gave him a special law. He had a special Law before the Fall. This was the period of innocence. Then came the Fall. Then followed the Patriarchial Law. Next God gave him the Mosaic Law. Lastly, He gave him the New Law. It is the Law of the Gospel. It is to serve to the end of the world. It is the perfection of God's law to man.

The Mosaic Law was binding only on the Jews. It was called the Old

Dispensation. Christ came to fulfil the law. He established the New Law. It is the New Testament. It is a supernatural law. It is the law of grace.

The New Law contains threefold precepts. These are Theological, moral and sacramental precepts. The Theological precepts pertain to the Theological virtues. The moral precepts are contained in the Decalogue. Christ confirmed these moral precepts. He gave them greater perfection.

"Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets," says Christ. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For amen, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled."[2]

The Law of the Gospel also contains sacramental precepts. These regulate the Holy Sacrifice. They also regulate the administration of the Sacraments.

[2] St. Matthew v, 17, 18.

Christ gave a precept to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice. "Do this for a commemoration of me."[3] He gave a precept for Baptism: "Amen, amen, I say unto thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter into the kingdom of God."[4] He also gave a precept for the Holy Eucharist: "Except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you."[5] Many other sacramental precepts are expressed in the New Testament.

The Law of the Gospel binds all men. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth," says our Blessed Lord. "Going therefore teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."[6]

[3] St. Luke xxii, 19.
[4] St. John iii, 5.
[5] St. John vi, 54.
[6] St. Matthew xxviii, 18, 19.

The Law of the Gospel does not impose the same obligation on all. Some are not yet members of the Church. These the Law of the Gospel binds to enter the Church. Hence, they are but indirectly bound to observe all the precepts of the Law.

The Church can not dispense from the divine law. Yet the Church interprets the divine law. She applies both the natural and the positive divine law. Infallibly she decides every question concerning the law.

The Church is the living custodian and interpreter of God's law upon earth. Her decisions on the law are ratified in heaven. There is no appeal from her decrees. For she is infallible in the teaching of morals as she is in the teaching of faith.

CHAPTER XV

Ecclesiastical Law

LAWS made by the Church are called ecclesiastical laws. Jurisdiction in the Church is well ordered.

The Pope possesses jurisdiction over all the faithful. He makes laws for the whole Church. He receives his power directly from Christ. At his election he receives all the powers that Christ conferred upon St. Peter.

Christ said to Peter: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[1] Again, He said to him: "Feed my sheep."[2]

[1] St. Matthew xvi, 19.
[2] St. John xxi, 17.

A general council also makes laws for the whole Church. It is called an Ecumenical Council. It must be presided over by the Pope or his legate. The Pope alone can call a general council.

A provincial council makes laws for an ecclesiastical province. A diocesan synod makes decrees for a diocese. A plenary council legislates for a whole country or region.

The cardinals have power to make laws for the government of their titular churches.

The Sacred Congregations of Rome have legislative powers. They are composed of cardinals. Yet their jurisdiction is subject to the authority of the Pope. Their decrees have the force of laws.

General decrees of the Sacred Congregations rightly promulgated for the universal Church have the force of laws. This is true only when they

have been approved as such by the Sovereign Pontiff. At least they must have been given out at his command.

Particular decrees of the Sacred Congregations bind only those for whom they were intended. For them they have the force of particular precepts. They do not bind others. Different decrees may be given for others. The circumstances may be different. For this reason decrees sometimes seem to be contradictory.

The Sacred Congregations always give the same response when the circumstances are the same. Particular responses bind only those for whom they are given. Yet they form a safe norm for all. They supply a decision which can be safely followed as a rule for judging a like question. It would be rash and dangerous to act contrary to the spirit even of a particular decree.

Bishops make laws for their own diocese. They make laws through a

diocesan synod. They also make laws direct. They receive legislative power when they are appointed by the Pope. This power is included in their jurisdiction.

A bishop can not make laws contrary to the general laws of the Church. He can, however, make laws that extend beyond the scope of the general law.

At the death of the bishop, an administrator is appointed for the diocese. He receives jurisdiction. He rules the diocese until a new bishop is appointed for the diocese.

Superioresses have no ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Women can have no jurisdiction in the Church. Yet superioresses can impose precepts on their subjects as a matter of obedience. But their rules and constitutions must be approved by their ecclesiastical superior.

CHAPTER XVI

The Civil Law

WE are bound to obey the civil law. All authority comes from God. Hence in general the civil law binds us in conscience.

There are indeed laws that do not bind in conscience. These are the purely penal laws. They simply impose a fine upon those that break them. It is clear from their very nature that they do not bind in conscience.

The good of society demands that we respect the law. We must honor courts of justice. It would certainly be a sin to show contempt for the law.

The civil law is of a lower order than the law of God. It must ever be in harmony with the divine law. There

may be conflict between the civil law and the law of God. Then the law of God is to be obeyed. The civil law must be rejected.

No human law can rightly interfere with our duty to God. Such a law would cease to bind us. Indeed we would be bound to resist it.

The State has a duty to establish and maintain social order. It has a right to levy taxes. It has a right to demand military service. It is certain that the State can demand military service for national defense. It can also make this demand to preserve national rights.

The law makes special demands upon certain individuals. Such are officials of the law. Judges are bound to possess sufficient knowledge of the law. They must be able to render just and wise decisions. Otherwise, they may do injustice to others.

Judges must use care and diligence

in deciding their cases. They must study the evidence. They must strive to render justice to all that come before their tribunal.

Judges are bound to make restitution for any grave injury or loss they have culpably caused to others. This may arise from culpable ignorance or from neglect.

In case of doubt the judge should favor the accused. Hence, he should not impose punishment unless the person's guilt is certain.

In civil cases, when the evidence seems equally strong for both sides, the judge may decide for either. If one party, however, is in peaceful possession he should be favored.

The judge may not use private information in deciding criminal cases. Privately he may know that the accused is guilty. Yet the evidence has not shown his guilt. He must liberate him. For he acts as judge by public

authority and not by private information.

One case is more difficult. The judge knows from private information that the accused is innocent. Yet the evidence is all against him. Here the judge must do all in his power to acquit the accused. Yet withal he must follow the form of the law.

Judges are forbidden to demand gifts. To ask them even when they intend to pass just sentence is a sin against commutative justice. If they have asked gifts for an honest purpose they are not bound to restitution. If the purpose was dishonest they are bound to make restitution.

Judges should beware of gifts in general. For these easily take the nature of bribes. They may influence their judgment. Thus they would be drawn into a grave sin of injustice.

Jurymen should have sufficient knowledge to pass judgment on the

cases that are brought before them. Yet they may serve if the office is imposed upon them. They should, however, decide not to condemn any except those who are surely guilty.

A juryman may know privately that a person is innocent. The evidence may point clearly to guilt. In this case he is bound to stand for acquittal.

Jurymen are bound to decide according to their deepest conviction. But this conviction must come from the trial of the accused. Hence, a juryman may know that a person is guilty. Yet the evidence has not shown his guilt. In this case he should not condemn the accused. For he has not been judicially proved guilty.

In law the accuser is called the plaintiff. Upon him rests the burden of proving the guilt of the accused. The accused is called the defendant.

No one should accuse another unless he is certain of his guilt. In the

course of the case, he may become convinced that the accused is innocent. Then he should withdraw his accusation. He should also repair the injury done him.

Private citizens are bound to report crimes to the civil authorities. The common good demands this. They are bound in conscience to report grave crimes. The good of society demands it. For others may suffer serious injury if the criminal is left unpunished.

The defendant may always plead "not guilty." He is presumed innocent until he is proved guilty. He may indeed be guilty. Yet he may plead not guilty. This means that the law must prove his guilt. The expression is thus understood. It is not a falsehood.

The defendant may reveal the crimes of his accusers. This he does to weaken their testimony. Yet he must be truthful. But it may not help his

cause to reveal these crimes. It may not be necessary to reveal them. Then he sins both against charity and justice if he reveals them.

Lawyers are bound to have sufficient knowledge for their profession. They must be capable of doing justice to their clients. They must use care and diligence in handling their cases.

A lawyer may defend a guilty person. Yet he must use only lawful means to liberate him. He may strive for his acquittal even though he knows that the person is guilty.

Lawyers should not accept any unjust civil cases. They should tell the truth to their clients. The case may be a hopeless one. The lawyer should tell his client so. He should not allow the client to enter a suit which he is certain will fail.

Lawyers are bound to make reparation for injury done by unjust lawsuits. Their clients are bound first.

But if they fail, then the lawyers are bound to repair the injury done.

A lawyer may undertake a case. He thinks it is just. Later he finds that it is unjust. He is then bound to withdraw from the case. Otherwise, he would be bound with his client to make restitution.

Should a lawyer desert an unjust case he is not permitted to reveal the secrets of the case. He is bound by professional secrecy. He sins against justice if he reveals the confidences of his client.

The lawyer should demand only a just fee for his services. It is permitted to take a case on the percentage basis. The client agrees to give a certain part of the winnings to the lawyer. However, the lawyer should be truthful with his client. If the case is easy he should not try to convince him that it is difficult. He should

not take advantage of his client's ignorance or simplicity.

Witnesses are those who are cited by public authority to give testimony in court. Ordinarily, they take an oath to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. To fail in this is to commit a grave sin of perjury.

The witness is bound to testify. Yet in certain cases he may refuse to testify. A priest, a doctor or a lawyer may refuse to testify when a professional secret is involved.

He who gives false testimony sins against religion and justice. He is bound to repair the injury done. A witness must be sure of his testimony. He must not give doubtful information as certain. He must not testify on hearsay. He must have the truth in his heart and on his lips.

CHAPTER XVII

Object of Human Laws

LAWS are intended to procure the common good. Laws must be righteous, just, possible and useful.

All authority comes from God. But God could not give power to make wicked laws. Hence, laws must be righteous.

Laws that command evil do not bind us. Sometimes we doubt whether a law is righteous or wicked. Then we should generally decide in favor of the law.

Laws must be just. They must promote the common good. They must impose only such burdens as the subjects are able to bear. They must not exceed the power of the legislator.

Strictly speaking, we are not bound to obey unjust laws. However, prudence generally suggests that we obey them. This, however, supposes that they do not command us to act against conscience.

Human laws ordinarily deal with external actions. The civil law can not command mere internal actions. Both civil and ecclesiastical law can command external actions that presuppose the internal actions. Such would be the taking of an oath or the worthy reception of Paschal Communion.

Laws must be possible of observance. For none can be bound to do the impossible. A law that can not be observed can not serve the common good. It is rather a detriment to the community.

Laws must be both physically and morally possible of observance. They are physically possible when conditions

permit their observance. Physical impossibility is generally taken to mean absolute impossibility.

A thing is morally impossible when it is considered beyond the natural powers of many. Things that can be done only with great difficulty are said to be morally impossible. It requires great prudence to decide when a law is morally impossible of observance. Human laws can not ordinarily command acts of heroism. However, the civil law can command actions that are relatively heroic. It can send men to war. This is often, in itself, and act of heroism. It may mean to leave all that is dear on earth. It may mean to go into the jaws of death out of unselfish devotion to country.

Ecclesiastical law can command things that are very difficult. They may be heroic so far as the individual is concerned. It binds certain religious to perpetual inclosure after they have

freely entered this state of life. It binds priests to perfect chastity after they have freely taken the obligation upon themselves. It imposes many difficult precepts.

Laws must be useful. They must be beneficial to the community for which they were made. A law that benefits but a few is not valid. Laws are not intended for the good of a few to the exclusion of others. This is often a great evil.

Laws are sometimes made for the benefit of the favored few. Justly the people complain of this legislative favoritism. It is a cause of ruin for states and countries. It defeats the purpose of the law. It strikes at the vitals of society.

Class legislation is another great evil. The law should benefit the rich and poor alike. It should promote the welfare of the high and lowly alike. It should promote the interests of the whole social body.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Subjects of the Law

THE natural law binds all men. It binds in a general way even those who do not possess the use of reason. Hence, it is unlawful to incite such persons to actions contrary to the natural law.

To induce an idiot to break the law of nature would be a grave sin. The same would be true in regard to children that have not yet attained the use of reason.

All are bound by the general positive law of God. This law was promulgated by Christ. It binds all men to be baptized and to enter the Church. It binds them to preserve the unity and indissolubility of matrimony.

The faithful are bound by a special

positive law of God. This law is promulgated to them in all detail by the Church. Others are not directly bound to obey all the laws of the Church. They are indeed bound to enter the Church and thus obey her laws.

Human laws bind only those subjects who possess the use of reason. Hence, the human laws of the Church do not bind children nor those who are insane. For instance, these may eat meat on fast days. They are not bound to hear Mass on Sundays and holydays.

Strictly speaking, baptized non-Catholics are bound by the laws of the Church. They are in reality subject to the jurisdiction of the Church. They have been baptized. Thus they have entered the Church. Yet they refuse to accept her law and teaching. They do not always sin by breaking these laws. For generally they do not know that they are bound by them.

Children who have not completed their seventh year are not bound by the laws of the Church. They are supposed to reach the use of reason at this age. It matters not if they have attained the use of reason sooner.

Yet children, in some cases, do not possess the use of reason at the end of their seventh year. When this is certain they are not as yet bound by the laws of the Church.

After their seventh year children are bound to keep the laws that pertain to their state. They must hear Mass on Sundays and holydays. They must abstain from meat on the days appointed. They must confess their sins at least once a year. They must receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time.

CHAPTER XIX

Ecclesiastical Domicile

THOSE who have a domicile or a quasi-domicile in a place are subjects of the local lawgiver. He who has a domicile in a parish is a subject of the local pastor. He who has a domicile in a diocese is a subject of the local bishop.

A domicile may be voluntary or legal. It is voluntary when it has been acquired by choice. It is legal when it has been acquired through a disposition of the law.

Two things concur to form a voluntary domicile. The person must have actually taken up his residence in the place. Then he must have the intention of taking up permanent residence there. His domicile is acquired on the very

first day on which he takes up his residence in the place.

A person may have several domiciles. For instance, he may have both a winter home and a summer home. He may well have a domicile in both places. However, he would not acquire a domicile in a place in which he spent even a long vacation.

A legal domicile is fixed in the law. A wife acquires the domicile of her husband. Minor children have the domicile of their parents. Students have a quasi-domicile in the institution in which they are making their studies.

A person loses his domicile by leaving the place with the intention of making his home elsewhere.

A quasi-domicile is a supposed residence. A person acquires it when he takes up his abode in a place and has the intention of remaining there the

greater part of a year. This should not be less than six months.

Public officials, teachers, scholars, servants and others who spend a great part of the year in a distant place have a quasi-domicile there. A quasi-domicile is lost in the same manner as a domicile.

Travelers are not permitted to use their own diocesan privileges in a strange place. In their own diocese they may have had the privilege of eating meat on a day of abstinence. They could not use this privilege in another diocese where it had not been granted.

Travelers may use the privileges of the place in which they are staying. They may take advantage of any privileges that have been granted the people of that place.

Wanderers are those who have no domicile. In general they are not bound by particular laws. They are

bound by the common laws. Yet there are certain local laws that bind them. They are bound to obey particular laws of contract. They may be punished for wrong-doing wherever they be.

CHAPTER XX

Cessation of Laws

A LAW ceases to bind when it is repealed. To repeal a law means to take it away. A law can only be repealed by the authority that made it or by higher authority.

A law may be but partly repealed. Then it still binds in part. It binds in so far as it has not been repealed. A law may become null because of a new law. A new law sometimes takes away the force of an old law.

A law ceases to bind when the purpose for which it was made no longer exists. It also ceases to bind when it has become useless. Thus prayers are commanded for peace. But the war is over. There is no longer an object for the prayers. Again, there

is an epidemic. People are forbidden to appear on the streets. But the epidemic has disappeared. Now the law is useless.

Custom may annul a law in certain cases. There is an old maxim: "Custom makes a law." In both cases is meant approved custom. It must be admitted by the authorities of the law.

Custom can never take away a natural law. For the natural law is unchangeable. The same is true of divine law.

Custom changes the law only when the proper conditions are present. The custom must be admitted by consent of the lawgiver. It must be accepted by the major portion of the community. It must be reasonable. It must be freely practiced. It must pertain to a perfect community. Such are countries, provinces, dioceses, parishes and cities.

The precept obliging priests to recite the breviary was introduced by custom. So also were certain impediments to marriage.

The law can be relaxed by legitimate authority. This is called a dispensation. It is an act of jurisdiction. It is an act of the will. Hence, to be valid, it must be free.

No one can grant a dispensation unless he have legal authority.

The Pope can dispense in all ecclesiastical laws. This he does by his own proper authority. The bishop can dispense in all the statutes and laws of his diocese.

Even pastors can dispense in certain general laws. They are matters of frequent occurrence. They are not matters that affect the common good of the Church. Such is the precept of fasting. This power of dispensing is derived from custom. Hence, the

pastor is guided by the practice of his diocese.

A superior can grant a dispensation to his own subjects alone. This he can do even if they happen to be beyond the limits of his jurisdiction.

There can be no dispensation from the positive law of God. Nor can there be any real dispensation from the natural law of God. The Pope can, however, remove the condition that makes the natural law binding.

There must always be a cause for granting a dispensation. It must be a true and real cause. It may be internal. It may be external.

For example, a person may be sickly. This would constitute an internal cause for granting a dispensation from fasting. A person may obtain a dispensation to marry a non-Catholic. There may be no Catholics in the place whom he could marry. This would be an

external cause for granting the dispensation.

There must be, at least, one true proportionate cause as a motive for granting a dispensation. Otherwise the dispensation is invalid. Yet the lawmaker himself may dispense validly.

It is enough if the cause exists at the time in which the dispensation is granted. It is not enough if the cause existed only at the time in which the dispensation was sought. Hence, it is not allowed to ask a dispensation unless there is a true cause for seeking it.

A dispensation may be recalled. It can not then be used. Nor can a dispensation be used if the motives for granting it cease to exist.

A dispensation may be renounced. Yet this can not be if it injures another party. The superior must be told of the renunciation. He must be willing to permit it.

The law is enforced with mercy. Due consideration is always given to weakness and disability. Yet the law is guarded jealously. It is thus abuses must be kept out. Dispensations are not intended to make the law lax. They are granted to preserve the integrity and dignity of the law. They must always be in keeping with the spirit of the law.

CHAPTER XXI

Virtues

VIRTUES are habits. They are habits that perfect the powers of the soul. They dispose the faculties of the soul to do good. They enable us to avoid evil.

Not all habits are virtues. There are habits that have no bearing on good or evil. There are habits that are evil. There are good habits that do not operate on the powers of the soul. These are not virtues.

There are many kinds of virtues. There are natural and supernatural virtues. Natural virtues proceed from our natural faculties. They tend only to our natural end. They may be acquired or infused. But they are not above our natural powers.

Supernatural virtues are produced in the soul by the aid of supernatural grace. They help us to attain our supernatural destiny.

There are infused and acquired virtues. Infused virtues are produced in our soul directly by God. Acquired virtues are produced by repeated good actions. The grace of God also helps us to acquire virtues.

There are intellectual and appetitive virtues. Intellectual virtues enable the mind to know the truth. Appetitive virtues perfect the will in its quest for good.

Intelligence, wisdom, knowledge, method and prudence are generally called the intellectual virtues.

There are Theological and moral virtues. Theological virtues refer directly to God. They have for their object some divine perfection. Moral virtues have good actions for their object. They refer only indirectly to God.

There are ordinary and heroic virtues. Those that call for extraordinary courage or decision are heroic virtues. Virtues may also be perfect or imperfect. Those that are practiced in the state of grace are perfect. Those that are practiced in the state of sin are imperfect.

The principal moral virtues are prudence, justice,[1] fortitude and temperance. These are called the four cardinal virtues. Cardinal means pertaining to a hinge. All the other moral virtues hinge on these four.

Prudence directs our actions according to right reason. It enables us to do the right thing in the right way. Prudence makes our actions harmonize with ourselves and with others. It should extend to all our free-will actions. It should make them conform to right reason.

Prudence moderates our actions.

[1] Justice is treated fully in Volume IV.

Thus mercy bids us give to the poor. But prudence suggests how and when we should give so as to produce the most good. Charity bids us love our neighbor. Prudence suggests that we should not be carried away by our affections. It warns us not to fall into danger by our love and sympathy.

Prudence warns us to take counsel before we act. It warns us to use judgment in our actions. It warns us to keep our feelings under control.

To be prudent we must deliberate before we act. We must be circumspect. We must consider the circumstances. We must be firm in our resolutions. We must perform our duty at the proper time.

We must beware of false prudence. It tempts us to seek the things that satisfy our lower nature. It impels us to practice fraud and deceit. It makes us cling to temporal good. It causes

us to worry about our future material well being.

Many things aid us to prudence. We should remember the good things we have learned. We should try to understand the things about us. We should study the true value of things. We should have foresight. We should think of results. We should be cautious. We should seek to avoid hindrances.

Fortitude is the virtue of strength. It is a firmness of the soul in seeking good. It is constancy of purpose in doing good and avoiding evil.

As a special virtue, fortitude strengthens us to do difficult things. It gives us power to bear dangers and trials.

Fortitude enables us to overcome fear in times of misfortune and danger. It gives us courage in time of opposition.

Recklessness and rashness do not

belong to fortitude. Timidity and cowardice are also opposed to the virtue of fortitude.

There is a time to fear. Just fear can exist in the bravest. Fortitude enables us to meet the danger. Cowardice makes us shirk the duty of meeting dangers and difficulties.

Timidity makes us fear when there is no cause of fear. It makes us fear more than we should fear. Rashness impels us to go into danger without cause.

Fortitude fills the soul with greatness. It elevates the soul. It makes it patient and persevering.

Martyrdom is the highest act of fortitude. To die for the Faith is martyrdom. Yet even infants can undergo martyrdom. For them it suffices if they suffer violent death inflicted out of hatred for the Faith. The Church honors many children who were put to death for the Faith.

To constitute martyrdom death must be inflicted out of hatred for the Faith. By suffering this death willingly a person gives testimony to Christ. He is then a martyr.

Adults must really submit to death to be martyrs. If they resist the executioner they are not martyrs. They must imitate Christ Who offered Himself as a willing Victim.

To be a martyr a person must have upright motives. It is not enough if he dies to show his courage. He must have the intention of dying for the Faith. He must be in the state of grace. At least, he must be sorry for his sins.

Martyrdom is a heroic act. Christ has bestowed many privileges on His martyrs. He confers sanctifying grace on the unbaptized martyrs. He takes away all temporal punishment for their sins. Hence, the Church venerates martyrs immediately after their death. Christ has said: "Everyone therefore

that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven." And again: "He that shall lose his life for me, shall find it."[2]

The aureola is granted to those who are victorious for Christ. The enemy is threefold: the world, the flesh and the devil. So also the aureola is threefold. It is granted to martyrs. They conquer the world. It is granted to virgins. They conquer the flesh. It is granted to doctors. They conquer the devil.[3]

Temperance is the virtue by which we control our appetite for the pleasures of taste and touch. In a broader sense, temperance is the control of all our human appetites. It moderates our desires. It brings our appetites under the control of right reason.

Temperance regulates the inner man. It subdues fallen nature, as it were.

[2] St. Matthew x, 32-39.
[3] St. Thomas, Suppl. 2, 96, a. 1. c.

It restrains the yearnings of man for pleasure and animal satisfaction.

There are strong passions in man. These the virtue of temperance controls. It makes the higher man master over the lower man.

Gluttony and drunkenness are two common sins against temperance. They are intemperance in eating and drinking. But drunkenness is taken today to mean intemperance. Hence, temperance is generally understood to be moderation in drinking.

Temperance deters man from all forbidden pleasures. It engenders abstinence, sobriety and chastity.

Abstinence is moderation in the use of food and drink. Sobriety is moderation in the use of intoxicating drink. Chastity repels the desire for unlawful pleasure.

There are four virtues that pertain to temperance. They are, continence, meekness, clemency and modesty.

Continence is a virtue which strengthens the will against concupiscence. It deters especially from sins of touch. In a broader sense it means the same as chastity.

Meekness is a virtue which makes us refrain from anger. It compels our feelings of anger to submit to the dictates of right reason.

Clemency is a virtue which dispels the spirit of vindictiveness. It makes us avoid cruelty. It softens our desire to punish others severely.

Modesty is a virtue which guides us to follow the rules of propriety in all things. There are four kinds of modesty. They are humility, carefulness, modesty of conduct and modesty of culture.

These are beautiful virtues. They bring joy to the heart that possesses them. They make us feel the true joy of living.

CHAPTER XXII

The Evangelical Counsels

THE precepts of the Gospel are binding upon all. To be saved we must observe the precepts of the Gospel. Yet Christ laid down further rules for salvation. These do not bind all. They are called Counsels. They are intended only for those who seek Christian perfection. They bind those alone who freely choose to follow them.

There are three great Evangelical Counsels. They are: poverty, chastity and obedience. They are opposed to the three great hindrances to salvation. These are: riches, pleasures of the flesh and worldly honors.

Any unlawful indulgence in any of these is forbidden by precept. Yet

the Counsels go further. They prompt us to avoid even that which is in itself lawful. They prompt us to despise the honors and pleasures of this life.

Christ recited the precepts to the young man in the Gospel. To keep these, He said, would bring him to eternal life. But He said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me."[1]

Of perfect chastity, St. Paul says: "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful."[2]

It is possible to be saved without keeping the Evangelical Counsels. A man may be as rich as Croesus and yet save his soul. He may live a

[1] St. Matthew xix, 21.

[2] 1 Epistle to the Corinthians vii, 25.

married life and yet attain to great sanctity. Nor need anyone submit in all things to the will of a superior to save his soul.

Evangelical poverty is the complete renunciation of all worldly possessions. Religious take a vow of poverty. They are then forbidden to possess any worldly goods.

Evangelical chastity is the complete renunciation of all carnal pleasure. It excludes the use of marriage. Priests and religious are bound by the vow of chastity. Even an unchaste thought is a grave sin against this holy vow.

Evangelical obedience means complete obedience to the will of a religious superior. Religious take a vow of obedience. They are bound to obey their superior in all things.

The Evangelical Counsels are intended for chosen souls. Lay people have often observed them. Yet they

are generally followed only by those who enter religion.

Our blessed Lord knew the weakness of human nature. He did not place unbearable burdens upon men's shoulders. He demanded that all should lead good, pious lives. Yet He did not demand, under pain of damnation, that all should be perfect.

Christ knew that there would be many devout souls. These would desire to do more than the law required for salvation. These would gladly leave all things to follow Him. Hence, He gave the Evangelical Counsels. Through them heroic souls could know how to attain Christian perfection.

CHAPTER XXIII

Christian Perfection

THE faithful Christian strives to follow Christ in his life. He strives to do the will of God in all things. Thus he is united with God. This is Christian perfection.

The Evangelical Counsels are means to attain Christian perfection. They remove the great hindrances to the practice of virtue. Yet Christian perfection does not consist in the practice of the Evangelical Counsels. It consists principally in the faithful observance of the precepts.

Love is the basis of Christian perfection. First, it is the love of God. Then it is the love of our neighbor. "Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole

heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like unto this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets."[1]

As God, Christ is the highest object of our love. He is the end and center of our moral lives. As man, He is the most sublime model of all virtues. He embodies the perfection of both human and divine love.

St. Paul names a long list of virtues which the faithful should possess. "But above all these things," he says, "have charity, which is the bond of perfection."[2]

Again the same Apostle says: "Love therefore is the fulfilling of the law."[3]

[1] St. Matthew xxii, 37-40.
[2] Epistle to the Colossians iii, 14.
[3] Epistle to the Romans xiii, 10.

"He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is charity," says St. John."[4]

By love we are united with God in this world. The more closely we are united with God the more perfect are our lives. God alone is perfect of Himself. Our lives can only be perfect in so far as they conform to His divine will.

God wants us all to be perfect. Those who live in religion are bound, in a special manner, to strive for perfection. They are set aside from the world. They have consecrated their lives to God.

Religious are bound by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They have freely taken these sacred vows. They are free from the cares and distractions of the world. They have cast off family ties. They have cast aside worldly possessions. The one

[4] 1 Epistle of St. John iv, 8.

great concern of their lives is to love and serve God.

People who live in the world should also strive after Christian perfection. For Christ said: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."[5]

The saints attained Christian perfection. They learned the secret of love. They meditated on the goodness and perfection of God. They set their hearts on eternity. They saw the vanity and emptiness of this world's pleasures.

The saints were tireless in doing the will of God. They fulfilled the law with great zeal and care. They were filled with charity. Their charity manifested itself in their works.

They sought more and more to show their love for God. Every act of their lives became an act of love. Thus, too, they showed their love for their neighbor.

[5] St. Matthew v, 48.

The saints showed great love for their fellowmen. They were glad to perform the lowliest services for them. They were happy when they could suffer for them. They rejoiced when they could die for them. Thus they followed the example of Christ.

It was this fidelity to God's law that made the saints perfect. They obeyed the spirit of the law. They saw that the law was intended to make their lives perfect in love. They saw that thus they could be united with God even in this world.

Many of the great saints lived in the world. By no means were they all religious. Nor did they all observe the Evangelical Counsels. They all, indeed, observed the spirit of the Evangelical Counsels. Many kings and queens became great saints. They were surrounded by pomp and luxury. Yet they were poor in spirit. They despised the goods and pleasures of the world.

Mothers and fathers of families became great saints. They performed the duties of their state. They did all things well. They made their lives conform to the will of God. They attained Christian perfection.

Christians in all stations of life have become saints. Slaves, servant-girls, princes and rulers alike have attained great sanctity of life.

Our first concern on earth is to love God. By this love alone can we make progress in Christian perfection. To love God means to direct our whole lives to God. It means to consecrate ourselves to Him. It means to live for Him.

Those who are truly faithful lead a spiritual life. Their lives are simplified. God is everything to them. His divine will is the rule of their lives. Day by day they strive to come nearer to Him.

Three things, in a special manner,

form the spiritual life. They are prayer, self-denial and love of God.

Prayer is the first requisite for the spiritual life. God in His infinite wisdom has decreed that we must cooperate in our own salvation. Those who do not possess the use of reason may indeed be saved without their own cooperation.

To pray means to talk with God. We come before God in spirit. We speak to Him. We tell Him the sentiments of our hearts. We tell Him our trials and our sorrows. We ask Him for what we need. We thank Him for His graces and blessings.

God listens to us. He is ever ready to receive us. His goodness is boundless. He has promised us all that we can ask. "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer," He says, "believing, you shall receive."[6]

By prayer we acknowledge the God-

[6] St. Matthew xxi, 22.

head of God. We adore Him. We show our love for Him. We worship Him.

By prayer our heart becomes an altar. It becomes a temple of religion. It makes God the guide and ruler of our lives.

Prayer is easy. To pray well we need not be learned. We need not be great. To pray well we need only be sincere. We need only have the trust of a child. We need only pour out our heart to God.

By prayer we acknowledge our weakness. Then God becomes our strength. In Him we can do all things. We can do His holy will. We can overcome temptations. We can avoid sin. We can practice virtue.

Prayer it was that made the saints strong. Without prayer they would have fallen under temptation. They could not have persevered. Prayer is the beginning of all good. Prayer is

the only hope of perseverance. Prayer is the prime necessity of the spiritual life.

Self-denial is necessary for the spiritual life. Prayer turns our thoughts to God. Self-denial turns our thoughts to our own spiritual needs. It enables us to know our own nature.

We possess, as it were, two natures. We have animal appetites within us. These are called the lower nature. We are prone to pride and selfishness. But we have also noble spiritual desires within us. These are called our higher nature.

Our lives must be regulated. The lower appetites must be subject to reason. Our lower nature is constantly striving to gain the mastery over our higher nature. This is the result of original sin. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit."[7]

By self-denial we subdue the lower

[7] Epistle to the Galatians v, 17.

appetites. It is called mortification. It means to kill the power of the flesh.

The sensual appetites are not wholly satisfied by indulgence. The more they are indulged the more they crave. Their craving is insatiable.

By self-denial we do not destroy our animal appetites. We curb them. We regulate them. We subject them to reason. Thus by self-denial we perfect our nature. We make our whole lives rational.

Mortification is a sort of training. It enables us to follow right reason in our lives. It strengthens us against the power of passion. It strengthens us so that no passion can rule us.

Our passions are like fierce beasts. We must keep them under subjection. Else they will tear us to pieces. They will drag us into incredible wickedness.

Christ made self-denial a condition for becoming His disciple: "If any

man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."[8]

To practice self-denial it is not necessary to perform extraordinary penances. Self-denial pertains primarily to the ordinary things of life. We must be moderate in our eating and drinking. We must be watchful in our conduct toward others. We must control our joys and our pleasures. We must bear our trials and our sufferings patiently.

Every hour of the day we can find means of practicing self-denial. Above all we must have interior mortification. By this we watch over the desires of our will. We regulate our intellect. We set a guard over our imagination.

Self-denial enables us to cast off the weariness of nature. It gives us power and zeal to serve God. It helps us to lead a truly spiritual life.

[8] St. Matthew xvi, 24.

Mortification turns the heart away from earth. Love turns the heart to God. Love is the foundation of Christian perfection. It is also the consummation of the spiritual life.

God is our last end and destiny. We are destined to love Him eternally. Hence, love must be the motive of the spiritual life. It is the power of the soul. It is to man what electricity is to the electric car.

Love prompts us to seek God in all that we do. Love urges us to labor for the honor and glory of God. Love makes us long to be united with God. Thus love is the soul of the spiritual life.

CHAPTER XXIV

Sin

ANY wilful transgression of the divine law is a sin. God gave man a law. He wrote the general outline of this law in man's heart at creation. Then He revealed it more fully to him. To break this law is a sin. It is an act of rebellion against God's will.

None other than a free action can be a sin. It must be a wilful action. Sin is an act of the will. He who has not the use of reason can not sin. His actions are not free.

Sin is an act committed against the dictates of right conscience. For the law of God binds in conscience. The law may be promulgated by God Himself. It may be proclaimed by

nature. It may be taught by the Church. Always it expresses the will of God. It binds man's conscience. To disregard this law is a sin.

Sin is an evil action. It is evil because it is contrary to the law of God. It is an action performed with deliberation and with free will.

We can not sin unknowingly. Our mind must actually advert to the malice of the action. It is not necessary to advert to the fact that the action is an offence against God. Yet it is necessary to know that it is evil. It is necessary to know that it is opposed to right reason. Otherwise the action could not be a sin. It would not be a wilful transgression of God's law.

A hunter sees a form in the bushes. He thinks it is a deer. He fires. A man falls mortally wounded. The hunter is not guilty of murder. He did not know that his shot was to be murderous.

There can be no sin without the consent of the will. Evil images often come to the mind against the will. These are not sins. Temptations arise within us. Feelings of anger come upon us. These are not sins. Our will does not consent to them.

There is original sin and there is actual sin. We inherit original sin from our first parents. Actual sin we commit ourselves.

There are sins of commission and sins of omission. To steal is a sin of commission. It means to do something forbidden. To miss Mass on Sunday is a sin of omission. It means to fail to fulfil a duty or precept.

There are internal and external sins. Any evil thought or desire is an internal sin. It is a sin committed in the mind or heart alone. An external sin is one that is completed with an external act. Murder, theft, perjury, are external sins.

There are sins directly against God. Such a sin is blasphemy. There are sins against our neighbor. Such are theft, calumny and slander. There are sins against ourselves. Such a sin is drunkenness.

There are sins of ignorance. These are the evils into which men fall because of wilful ignorance. Defection from the Faith is often a sin of ignorance.

There are sins of weakness. These are sins of the passions. They are the result of strong temptations.

There are sins of malice. These sins proceed from an evil will. They are committed in cold blood, as it were. They have neither ignorance nor temptation to lessen their guilt.

There are mortal sins and venial sins. Mortal sin is a grave sin. It deprives the soul of sanctifying grace. For this reason it is called mortal.

This is spiritual death. It makes the soul liable to eternal damnation.

Venial sin is a slight offence against the law of God. It does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace. Yet it is displeasing to God.

There is material sin and there is formal sin. To break God's law unknowingly is a material sin. It is not imputed to us as a sin. It is not a wilful transgression of God's law. It is but the material act that entails no guilt or punishment.

Formal sin is sin proper. It is a wilful transgression of God's law. It brings guilt upon the soul.

CHAPTER XXV

Mortal Sin

MORTAL sin is a grave offence committed against the law of God. It brings spiritual death upon the soul. If not forgiven its penalty is eternal punishment. "The wages of sin is death,"[1] says the Apostle.

By mortal sin man abandons his last end. He turns away from God. He rejects eternal life. He turns to creatures. He chooses earthly goods.

By mortal sin man turns away from God. He knows that this sin is utterly repugnant to God. He knows that he must choose between God and sin. Yet deliberately he chooses sin.

Man must preserve the friendship of God. Thus alone he can come to his

[1] Epistle to the Romans vi, 23.

eternal destiny. By mortal sin he loses God's friendship. He becomes God's enemy. Thus he casts away his eternal inheritance.

Mortal sin is an offence against God. It calls down God's displeasure. It is the rebellion of a creature against God. By mortal sin man loses sanctifying grace. The just man is pleasing to God. By sanctifying grace he lives in God's love and friendship. By mortal sin he turns away from God. He loses sanctifying grace.

Mortal sin shows contempt for God. The sinner offends God. By his action he mocks God. He disdains God's precepts. He rebels against the divine will. He puts himself above His Creator.

God has given to man a clear and reasonable law. To break this law man must reject the authority of God. He must ignore the love and solicitude of his Heavenly Father. He must be

indifferent to the threats of God's justice. Hence, his guilt is infinite.

The guilt of sin remains as long as man clings to his sin. God may permit him to repent in this life. There is no repentance after death. He who dies in sin remains in his sin for all eternity. Hence, his punishment is eternal. For all eternity he calls down upon himself the just indignation of God.

God administers some punishment for sin in this life. This He does in His mercy. He wishes to turn men from sin. He wants to show them the wickedness of sin.

The proper punishment of mortal sin is eternal damnation. It means eternal separation from God. It means also an eternity of pain and torment in hell.

Three conditions are necessary to make a sin mortal. The matter must be grave or serious. The thing itself may be grave. It may be a divine

precept. It may be a serious injury to our neighbor. It may be a grave obligation of charity or justice.

A matter may be grave because of circumstances. Ordinarily, it would be only a venial matter to steal a few pennies' worth of anything. Yet a poor widow may have but a few pennies' worth of bread. This may be necessary to keep her from starvation. To steal her little loaf would thus be a mortal sin.

To be mortal a sin must be committed with sufficient reflection. He who commits a mortal sin must know its malice. He must know the grave obligation of the law that he breaks.

The sinner must realize that he is breaking the law of God in a serious matter. It is enough if he clearly suspects that what he is doing is seriously sinful.

A person may know that he is doing wrong. But he takes no thought wheth-

er the evil is grave or slight. He does not recognize a grave obligation. He simply does wrong without thinking about the serious nature of his action. Here he does not commit a mortal sin.

To make a sin mortal there must be full consent of the will. Passion and fear do not always take away full consent of the will. It suffices if a person has deliberately chosen the sin. Temptation may indeed be strong. Yet the will is free. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."[2]

A person is tempted to commit a grave sin. The opportunity is open before him. But he avoids the sin. It is reasonably certain that he did not consent to the internal sin.

A person finds that he has been engaged with impure thoughts. Im-

[2] 1 Epistle to the Corinthians x, 13.

mediately he tries to drive them from his mind. It is certain that he did not give full consent to these bad thoughts.

A person hesitates about committing a mortal sin. He is tempted, but he wavers. Suddenly he realizes more fully the malice of the sin. Then he rejects the sin. Here he does not commit a mortal sin. He is simply slow in fulfilling his obligation.

Again, a person may hesitate for another reason. He may deliberate whether or not he is willing to commit the mortal sin. Here he commits a mortal sin. For his will is ready to consent to the sin.

Infinite indeed is the gravity of mortal sin. It is a great grace to realize the heinous character of mortal sin.

Inevitable is the punishment of mortal sin. The very truth of God is the pledge of this punishment. He who meditates on the wickedness of mortal

sin will ever avoid it. There is no power that can force us to commit a mortal sin. God gives us grace and strength to overcome all temptations.

We must love God. Then we will not turn away from Him. We will cling to Him as our God and our Father. We will reject the allurements of sin. We will remain happy in the joy of sanctifying grace.

CHAPTER XXVI

Venial Sin

THERE are sins that are slight. They do not cause spiritual death to the soul. Those who commit them do not incur liability to eternal damnation. These are called venial sins.

Venial sins are slight by their very nature. They are sins of thoughtlessness and carelessness. They are sins against the less important precepts. They pertain to smaller matters. They may indeed sometimes pertain to grave matters. Then they are venial for another reason. They are committed without sufficient reflection. Or they are committed without full consent of the will.

Not all precepts of God impose a grave obligation. Nor are all duties

equally important. Nor are all our evil actions equally sinful. Otherwise it would be almost impossible to attain salvation.

There are sins which are not grievous in the eyes of God. Even the just man falls frequently into these sins. Holy Writ says: "For there is no just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not."[1]

Again it is said: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."[2] Now these sins can not surely be mortal sins. It is impossible to suppose that the Apostles and the other great saints were given to mortal sins. It is clear that reference is made to venial sins.

Venial sin is an action committed against the law of God. It is a refusal to do the will of God completely. Yet it does not turn us away from God.

[1] Ecclesiases vii, 21.
[2] 1 Epistle of St. John i, 8.

By venial sin we displease God. Yet we do not lose His friendship. By venial sin we incur temporal punishment only. Venial sin is by nature pardonable. Mortal sin is, in a sense, by nature unpardonable. Yet God in His mercy pardons mortal sin.

Venial sin does not take away sanctifying grace from the soul. No multitude of venial sins can ever make one mortal sin. They may, however, lead to mortal sin. They often produce lukewarmness and indifference. Thus the soul is exposed to grave sins.

Venial sin does not lessen sanctifying grace in the soul. It does not extinguish charity from the heart as does mortal sin. Nor does it take away the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Nor does it take away the infused virtues.

Venial sin does not leave a stain upon the soul. This takes place only with the loss of sanctifying grace. Yet it lessens the beauty of the soul in

another sense. It causes the soul to suffer God's displeasure. It makes the soul subject to temporal punishment.

Venial sin diminishes the fervor of charity. It makes the soul languid in the practice of virtue. It brings on dryness and tepidity.

The devout Christian always strives to avoid deliberate venial sin. He loves God. He would not commit the slightest deliberate offence against Him. To him even venial sin is a great evil. For it is displeasing to our all-loving God.

CHAPTER XXVII

Numerical Distinction of Sins

CIRCUMSTANCES sometimes change the nature of sin. Theft is a sin. Theft of a sacred thing is a sacrilegious theft. To calumniate is a sin. To calumniate a priest grievously is a sacrilegious calumny.

A single action may constitute several sins. It may be a transgression of several precepts. For example, a person is obliged by precept to fast. He has also made a vow to fast. But he fails to fast. Thus he commits two sins. He sins against the precept. He also sins against his vow.

Again, there may be several precepts with one single motive. To break them by a single act is but one sin. Thus theft is forbidden by divine law, by

human law, and by the law of nature. To steal is to sin against all these laws. Yet the motive of all is the same. But yet theft is not a threefold sin.

Several actions sometimes constitute but one sin. This is the case when actions are morally united. They really form one action. The intention unites the actions. A person decides to commit an evil deed. He performs several actions to accomplish it. They all refer to the end he has in view. They constitute but one sin.

A man makes up his mind to kill another. He procures a weapon. He lies in wait for him. He spends days in finding an opportunity. He seizes him. He kills him. This all constitutes one grievous sin.

A person decides to steal ten dollars. He takes one dollar at different times. He has taken money ten times. He has committed but one serious sin. He may simply confess a theft of ten

dollars. It would not suffice to confess ten venial sins.

The intention changes the case. A person decides to steal five dollars. He takes the money by one or several actions. Then he goes back. He steals five dollars more. Here he has committed two sins.

The same is true in the case of murder. A man decides to wound another. He lies in wait for him. He strikes him down. Then he decides to kill him. He has committed two sins. The one is a sin of injury. The other is a sin of murder.

The will may also unite diverse evil actions. They then constitute but one sin. For example, a person is in a fit of passion. He blasphemes several times. It all arises from one provocation. It is all done in the same fit of passion. It all perhaps constitutes but one sin of blasphemy.

A short interruption does not dis-

unite actions that are thus united. Yet if the interruption were to last several hours, the new outburst would certainly be a distinct sin. This pertains especially to internal sins. A person may give way to bad thoughts. They may come to him again and again throughout a whole day. He may put them out of his mind for two or three hours. He may then consent to them again. This would undoubtedly constitute a distinct sin.

Complete external actions can not be united so as to form one single sin. A person decides not to fast during Lent. He is bound by the precept of fasting. His evil intention constitutes one single sin. Yet he sins each day he fails to fast.

Certain objects may be united morally. A person may have hatred for a whole family. He hates them as a family, not as individuals. Then his hatred constitutes but one sin.

We are obliged to tell the number of our serious sins in confession. It is well to know the rules by which to determine the numerical distinction of sins. In case of doubt the confessor will readily decide the question. It is necessary only to tell him the matter clearly.

To avoid sin we need, above all, the grace of God. Yet we must also use our will and intellect. It is like the science of modern sanitation. The truth about diseases is studied. Thus we are better able to protect ourselves against them.

Sin is the most hideous disease with which mortal man can be afflicted. It mars the beauty of an immortal soul. It blights the love of God in the heart of man. It banishes sanctifying grace from the soul. It drags the noblest creature of earth to eternal perdition.

In confession it is necessary to reveal the conditions that indicate the

species of a sin. For example, a person confesses that he has sinned against justice. But there are many kinds of sins against justice. Hence, he should tell the species of the sin. It might have been murder, detraction, theft. Thus it should be confessed.

There are different species of sin. One mortal sin may be specifically different from another mortal sin. Likewise one venial sin may differ from another venial sin.

Sins may be opposed to virtues that are essentially different. Then these sins are specifically different. They belong to different species. Thus heresy is opposed to Faith. Despair is opposed to hope. Odium against God is opposed to charity. These three sins are specifically different. They are opposed to three virtues that are essentially different.

But sins may be opposed to one virtue in a diverse manner. Thus they

are specifically different. The virtue may have morally diverse objects to fulfil. Then sins opposed to these different objects are specifically different.

Thus the object of justice is morally diverse. It seeks to guard our neighbor's life, his good name and his material welfare. The sin of murder is specifically different from the sin of calumny. The sin of detraction is specifically different from the sin of theft.

Perjury, blasphemy and the breaking of vows are specifically different sins. Yet they are all opposed to the virtue of religion. They are all opposed to this virtue in diverse ways.

Local, real and personal sacrileges are opposed to the virtue of religion. Yet they are specifically different. They are opposed to objects of this virtue that are morally diverse.

Sins of commission and omission

against the same virtue are not always specifically different. They may refer to the same object. Thus theft and the omission of restitution may belong to the same species of sins.

But generally sins of commission and omission against the same virtue are specifically different. Thus heresy is specifically different from the omission to make an act of faith. They offend the same virtue in different ways.

Sins of excess and sins of defect against the same virtue are specifically different. Presumption and despair are both opposed to the virtue of hope. The one is a sin of excess. The other is a sin of defect. They are specifically different.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Internal Sins

SINS of thought and desire are internal sins. They are completed in the mind and will. Internal sins are divided into three classes. They are sins of desire, sins of evil pleasure and sins of bad thoughts.

Evil desires have the same malice as the sin to which they refer. The wickedness of the sin is derived from the thing desired. Hence, Christ Himself said: "But I say to you, whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart."[1]

Conditions sometimes take away the malice of desires. A person desires to eat meat on Friday. He says within

[1] St. Matthew v, 28.

himself: "I would eat meat if it were not Friday." This would not be a sinful desire.

It is sinful to take pleasure in evil that has been done. This sinful pleasure derives its malice from the evil done. If the evil was grave the sin of pleasure is grave. It is also sinful to be sorry for good that has been done.

Bad thoughts are sinful. The mind dwells upon sinful things. The imagination presents sinful pictures to the mind. There may be no intention of committing the external sin. Yet the will consents to forbidden pleasures of the imagination. It permits the thoughts to dwell upon them. This is a sin.

Bad thoughts are as sinful as the things upon which they dwell. The thoughts may be allowed to dwell upon something that would be a mortal sin. Then they constitute a mortal

sin. But again the matter may be slight. Then they would be a venial sin.

It is allowed to think about certain things that are permitted. Yet such thoughts are often fraught with danger. They may lead to unlawful thoughts. They tend to lower the moral standard of Christian life.

Evil thoughts are sinful when they are wilful. Such thoughts and desires often come to the mind of themselves. The faithful Christian does not consent to them. Then they are mere temptations. They are not sins, for they are not wilful.

Fallen human nature is beset with corruption. It is humiliating to know the baseness that lurks in the human heart. It is great wisdom to understand the weakness of human nature.

The power of God's grace is shown in the victory of human weakness.

"Power is made perfect in infirmity."[2] Virtue triumphs over all evil inclinations.

There is peace in a pure heart. It is the peace which the world can not give. Nor can any power on earth take away this peace. "Blessed are the clean of heart," says our Divine Saviour, "for they shall see God."[3]

[2] II Epistle to the Corinthians xii, 9.
[3] St. Matthew v, 8.

CHAPTER XXIX

The Capital Sins

THERE are seven capital sins. They are pride, avarice, lust, envy, gluttony, anger and sloth.

Pride is sometimes called the root of all evil. It is an inordinate love of our own worth. It is opposed to the virtue of humility. A person may possess excellence. He forgets that he owes it to God. He makes too much of his excellence. This is the essence of pride.

Vain pride makes a person think too much of himself. He is delighted with himself. He puts himself above others. He looks down upon others. He likes to display his worth. He courts honors. He seeks praise and flattery.

Consummate pride is, by its very

nature, a mortal sin. This means that a person so places himself above others that he refuses to be subject to anyone, perhaps even to God.

There is also a less serious kind of pride. A person subjects himself to God and to his lawful superiors. Yet he thinks too much of himself. He is vain. He has an inordinate desire to show his worth. This kind of pride is generally only a venial sin.

Yet such pride is at times a mortal sin. It may entail grave contempt for others. It may carry with it grave injury to others. It may lead to other grave sins. Then it would ordinarily constitute a mortal sin.

Pride is called the mother of all other sins. Indeed it prompts all kinds of sins. Ambition and vainglory are called the children of pride.

Ambition is an inordinate love of honors and dignities. It prompts men to seek offices for which they are not

fitted. It prompts men to lay schemes to attain high positions. It is a sin that often causes great injury to the common good.

It is permitted to desire dignities and promotion. Yet this desire must always be in keeping with right reason. It must proceed from an upright motive.

Vainglory is an inordinate love of praise and self-display. In matters of lesser moment it is called vanity. To be puffed up because of wealth, looks or dress is vanity.

Boasting is a verbal expression of pride. Ostentation is pride shown through actions and signs. Hypocrisy is a false show of virtue. These all belong especially to vainglory.

God has given us our talents and our intellect. He has bestowed many graces and blessings upon us. Hence, we refer all our good to God. We thank Him for the gifts which we possess. We say with the Psalmist:

"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory."[1]

Avarice is an inordinate love of temporal goods. It is opposed to the virtue of liberality. The vice of avarice can be found equally in poor and rich. Both may cling to the things of this world.

Avarice is generally a venial sin. It may, however, be a mortal sin. At times it entails grave injustice or uncharity toward God or our neighbor. Then it is a mortal sin.

Avarice may be excess in clinging to earthly possessions. It is then called stinginess. It may also be excess in acquiring temporal goods. It is then called greed.

Avarice has five daughters. They are hardness of heart, interior disquietude, fraud, deceit, betrayal. The avaricious often show hardness of heart toward the poor. They speak harshly

[1] Psalm cxiii, 1.

to them. They repel them without mercy or pity.

The avaricious man often suffers interior disquietude. He does not possess peace in his heart. In his inner self he feels that his treasures are not lasting. He worries over them. He wears out his strength and his life amassing wealth. He is in constant dread lest he lose what he has gained.

Fraud is the deception of others by deeds. Those whose hearts are set upon the goods of this world are often tempted to commit this evil.

Lust is the root of all sins against the Sixth and Ninth Commandments. It is one of the greatest evils that have come upon fallen man. It often drives Faith and the love of God from men's hearts.

Envy is opposed to charity. It is a feeling of displeasure at another's good. By envy a person looks upon another's

good deeds and qualities as though they lessened his own.

Envy differs from emulation. By emulation we try to equal or surpass others. But we are not sorry because they also possess good qualities. We are simply sorry that we do not possess these qualities and we wish to acquire them.

We may be sorry at times because of another's good fortune. This may be for diverse reasons. Someone has been made our superior. We may be sorry because we fear oppression from him. This is not necessarily a sin. Yet it may easily lead to envy and uncharity.

Envy comes from pride. An envious person loves his own excellence. He dislikes good in others. Envy usually exists between those who are equals in some sense.

The vice of envy is very common amongst men. Some are more prone

to it than others. It is even found in men who are otherwise good.

Envy is of its nature a grave sin. It is a sin against the divine virtue of charity. However, to be a mortal sin envy must be of a serious nature. It must refer to some notable spiritual or corporal good of our neighbor. The envious person must seriously wish the loss of this great good to his neighbor under the impression that it lessens his own good qualities. Otherwise, he does not commit a mortal sin.

Envy may refer to greater or lesser good things. The greater the good envied, the greater is the sin. Hence, the greatest sin of envy is that which refers to our neighbor's spiritual gifts. To envy in another the gifts of the Holy Ghost, graces, virtues and sanctity is a grave sin.

It is the truly great souls that cast off envy. They are broad and generous. They rejoice in the blessings

of their fellowmen. They are generally cheerful. The sunshine of sincerity shines upon them. For they feel within them the joy of fidelity toward their neighbor. They love to see good resplendent in all the children of God.

Gluttony is excess in eating and drinking. It exceeds the bounds of reason. It turns men's hearts to their animal nature. Of the gluttonous, St. Paul speaks as men "whose God is their belly."[2]

Reason dictates that we use food and drink as means of sustaining our bodies. It sets the proper bounds in the use of these things. Gluttony makes men exceed the bounds of reason.

It is indeed permitted to eat more than is absolutely necessary to sustain life and health. There are occasions when feasting is not forbidden. The cause of hospitality and sociability often call for a more elaborate use of

[2] Epistle to the Philippians iii, 19.

food and drink. There are banquets at which sumptuous repasts are served. These are not forbidden. Yet always the sin of gluttony must be avoided.

The sin of gluttony may be committed in diverse ways. It may be committed by excess in seeking choice food and drink. It may be committed by expending too much care on the preparation of foods. It may be committed by taking food greedily. It may be committed by eating and drinking too often. To eat and drink for pleasure alone is a sin of gluttony.

Gluttony is ordinarily a venial sin. Yet it may be a mortal sin. A person may make eating and drinking the chief concern of life. He may think more of his stomach than he thinks of God's precepts. He may injure his mind by the same means. He may unfit himself for the performance of his duty. In such cases gluttony is a mortal sin.

Gluttony produces mental apathy. It generates slovenliness. It produces a certain levity in the exterior actions. It makes men talk carelessly.

Moderation in eating and drinking is a consoling virtue. It leaves the mind clear at all times. It helps to keep the body strong and healthy. It wards off many diseases of body and mind. It keeps men young and active all the days of their life.

To lose the use of reason by taking intoxicating drinks is drunkenness. An intoxicated person is one who can no longer distinguish between good and evil. The next day he does not remember the things he said and did. He does strange things that he would not do when he is in his right mind. These are sure signs that he was completely intoxicated.

Drunkenness is a mortal sin. St. Paul says that drunkards shall not

possess the kingdom of heaven.[3] God gave man reason. It guides him. It enables him to distinguish good from evil. Drunkenness takes away the use of reason. It reduces man to the condition of the brute.

Excessive drinking is intended to satisfy the animal appetite for pleasure. It turns men from their last end. It drags them down to disgrace and perdition.

The evil of drink in our day is appalling. It blasts the bright hopes of many young men. It brings bitter sorrow into countless homes. It embitters the lives of numberless mothers, wives and children.

The evil of drink has brought untold misery into the modern world. It has tainted the blood of nations. It has increased poverty and crime. It has helped to spread immorality.

Drunkenness has dragged multitudes

[3] I Epistle to the Corinthians vi, 10.

away from the Faith. It has hurled untold numbers into graves of perdition. It leads to dissipation and despair. It takes away honor and manhood. It is a destroyer of human souls.

The habit of drink is a curse. Once the habit is formed the door is open to all evils. The course of the drunkard is generally short and sad. Its end is destruction.

It is difficult to cast off the habit of drink. It enslaves the mind and will. It weakens the character. It makes moral cowards of men. It makes them social outcasts.

Blessed are those who from their youth avoid the use of intoxicating drink. They have fortified themselves against this great evil. They have not allowed themselves to acquire a taste for drink. Hence they are free men. They are secure against the danger of drink. They will have nothing to do

with it. They put themselves beyond the sphere of its temptations.

Many take a pledge of total abstinence. They promise to abstain from all intoxicating drinks. This is a good practice. It makes them secure against the evil of drink. It sets good example to others. It is an act of self-denial.

There are temperance societies almost everywhere. These are intended to promote sobriety. It is very laudable to join these societies. They are concerted means of combating the great evil of drink.

Sobriety is essential for all Christian virtues. Yet it belongs to the individual. Each must use his own willpower to be sober. He may be sure God's grace will help him.

The Church teaches that all moral evils must be corrected in the individual. There are many modern movements for the reform of the multitude.

This reform is sometimes sought by acts of legislation.

Prohibition is an attempt to curtail the use of intoxicating drink. It is brought about by legislation. When successful it may indeed lessen the occasion for drunkenness. Yet it can never produce sobriety directly.

The use of morphine and other opiates is another great evil. The drug habit is, if possible, worse than drunkenness. Its effects are similar to those produced by the most depraved drunkenness.

Anger is a vindictive desire. It is one of the selfish appetites in man. Ordinarily, it is only a venial sin. It is opposed to meekness.

Anger may become a mortal sin. It may be deliberate and wilful. It may disturb reason.

Revengeful anger is generally a mortal sin. It is opposed to the virtue of charity. It is also opposed to the

virtue of justice. Human nature is self-indulgent. It flatters and pampers itself by anger. Then its own discontent grows greater.

It is a form of pride to show anger for the faults of others. It is a desire to appear superior to others. It is a means of satisfying the lower appetites.

Sloth is weariness and neglect in labor. It is generally looked upon as indolence or laziness. It becomes sinful when it includes neglect of moral duties.

Sloth is one of the capital sins. In this sense it is weariness in the work of retaining God's grace and friendship. It is opposed to divine charity. It is generally a mortal sin.

It is a mortal sin wilfully to weary of keeping God's Commandments. It is also a grave sin to be sorry for possessing the Faith because of its many precepts. This is the worst form of sloth. It embraces a certain attitude of rebellion against God's will.

Sloth produces malice, rancor, despair, apathy and a dissipated mind.

Spiritual sloth is often but a spirit of slowness in the service of God. It is then only a venial sin. However, it often causes a person to neglect grave precepts. Thus it causes many mortal sins.

Fallen nature is lazy. Every man must struggle against his natural inclination to indolence. He must seek new motives for keeping up his struggle manfully. He must use his will to become diligent in the service of God.

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